

Ceasefire collapses

Yugoslav navy shells Dalmatian coast port

By DESSA TREVISAN AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

FIGHTING raged across Croatia yesterday as the noon ceasefire designed to save Yugoslavia from civil war came and went. The port of Split was attacked from air and sea, and the federal navy maintained its blockade of six other ports in defiance of the truce agreed with Lord Carrington on Tuesday.

The captain of a British ship outside Split said the navy gunboats had launched a fierce bombardment on a harbour in the port as the army exchanged fire with Croatian forces on land.

Heavy fighting was also reported in Varazdin, Vukovar, Dugo Selo, Karlovac, Sibenik and other towns. In the capital, Zagreb, people standing in front of the railway station threw themselves under cars as gunfire rang out.

In Dubrovnik, one of the seven ports blockaded on Tuesday, tourists were stranded as ferries failed to sail. A federal navy ship was said to be positioned outside the harbour while another patrolled the waters south of the port. The mayor of Zadar, another of the blockaded ports, said the federal army was advancing. "We're expecting bombing at any moment," Ivo Livjanic said. "We're expecting a massacre."

Meanwhile, Luka Bebic, the Croatian defence minister who had on Tuesday ordered an end to a siege of federal army bases in advance of the ceasefire, resigned. Different



ces between Mr Bebic and the republic's president, Franjo Tudjman, had become apparent when Mr Tudjman said that those who had issued the ceasefire before it was due to go into effect would be called to account.

Mr Tudjman later said that he would not withdraw from the bases and accused the federal army of violating the ceasefire. General Adrijana Raseta, the army's deputy commander in Zagreb, in turn blamed the Croats for the fighting that shook the capital shortly after the truce was signed.

In spite of the viciousness of the clashes, Lord Carrington said he had not given up hope that the ceasefire could succeed. "It is too early to write off this agreement. It would have been very optimistic to suppose that at 12 o'clock all fighting would have stopped," he told French radio. "We have to leave it for 24 hours



Elegant guard: a military policewoman in ceremonial uniform on duty as Mr Major is greeted by Mr Lubbers in The Hague

Oldest hostage 'close to freedom'

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN DAMASCUS

THE hostage issue took a step closer to being resolved last night after the official Iranian news agency reported that a Western victim was due to be released in Lebanon "in the next few hours".

The news agency, Irna, previously noted for the accuracy of its hostage stories, said that Jack Mann, aged 77, the former Battle of Britain fighter pilot and the oldest of the ten remaining Westerners in captivity was the most likely candidate. His wife, Sunnie, aged 73, who flew back to west Beirut last week on British government advice, later went to the British embassy in Lebanon - ostensibly to rest away from journalists - but there was no official British government confirmation of the Iranian report.

"We have no firm news to suggest that this report is correct," said John Tucknott, the charge d'affaires in Beirut. But a source close to the Iranian embassy in the Lebanese capital said later that the release was scheduled for either yesterday or tomorrow and that it would be preceded by a statement from the kidnappers, the pro-Iranian Revolutionary Justice Organisation, which last week gave the first evidence that Mr Mann was alive.

In Damascus, the normal venue for the handover of hostages, hasty preparations were being made by technicians from state television to relay film of any freedom

Generals' fear, page 10
Bernard Levin, page 16
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Bank sees an upturn

By COLIN NARBROUGH AND PHILIP BASSETT

ROBIN Leigh-Pemberton, governor of the Bank of England, said last night that the economy was climbing out of recession, but warned that cutting interest rates too far would risk repeating errors of the late eighties.

He told businessmen in the West Midlands that the economy was "undeniably improving". He saw encouraging

Dutch ease Major's fear over a federal Europe

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN THE HAGUE

PRESSURE on Britain to agree unwelcome shifts towards a federal Europe eased yesterday after a meeting in The Hague between the British and the Dutch prime ministers.

Ruud Lubbers, the Dutch prime minister, will chair the EC's crucial summit in Maastricht early in December and yesterday he acknowledged that the Community would not achieve "100 per cent" unity by then. Over the past few weeks the Dutch government, which is formally committed to a united states of Europe, has floated ideas for EC "political union" which have horrified London.

However, the radical proposals have not been officially presented to the conference revising the EC's treaty. Yesterday Mr Lubbers hinted that his government, which is internally divided over EC policy, would take account of likely British resistance. The Maastricht summit, he said, would not be the "final result" or "100 per cent" political union. The decisions taken at the end of the year, he said, would be one stage in a process of Europe finding a single voice.

He said that in creating the single market and moving towards economic and political union, the Community could move quickly. On other issues such as joint foreign policy, the 12 governments would have to be more cautious. "The speeds at which we can come together to a more common approach will be different."

John Major also drew a clear distinction between the

Yeltsin suffers mild heart attack

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

BORIS Yeltsin, the Russian president, was taken ill yesterday less than 24 hours before the opening of the new session of the Russian parliament, reportedly with a heart complaint. There was no confirmation that he was in hospital.

The acting chairman of the Russian parliament and a staunch Yeltsin ally, Russian Khasbulatov, was quoted as saying that Mr Yeltsin was "slightly ill", while other reports said he had suffered "a mild heart attack". Parliamentary spokesmen were still hoping that he would be well enough to address today's opening session as planned, but the euphoria which would have marked the first assembly of parliament since the defence of the "White House" during last month's coup, will be dampened.

Mr Yeltsin has experienced heart problems for several years. He was undergoing hospital treatment for a heart attack when he was summoned by Mikhail Gorbachev to be dismissed as first secretary of the Moscow Communist party organisation four years ago.

The Russian Federation, which had emerged triumphant from last month's attempted coup, was dealt a double blow yesterday. The reports of Mr Yeltsin's illness were followed by the news that the Russian prime minister, Ivan Silayev, had decided to move permanently to the centre's economic administration and resign his post.

Last week, Mr Silayev said he would leave the centre's four-man interim economic committee after accusations that as Russian prime minister he was neglecting the interests of the other republics.

Crucial decisions, page 10
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US sends jets back to Gulf

FROM SUSAN ELLICOTT IN WASHINGTON

THE United States will move extra air force units into Saudi Arabia as early as today in a final warning that Iraq must give United Nations inspectors access to Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction or face military reprisals, White House officials said.

President Bush's press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, described the plans as "a precautionary measure". Mr Bush said he did not expect any military action soon. "There is no deadline," he said.

The warning was the latest in a series of leaks from the Bush Administration this week designed to increase pressure on the Baghdad authorities to comply with UN ceasefire resolutions to the Gulf war. Mr Bush is seen as seeking to end Iraq's pattern of defiance on post-war issues before he addresses the United Nations on Monday about his vision for a new world order.

At issue is an Iraqi threat to forbid the inspectors from using any UN aircraft to fly around Iraq as they check

Continued on page 22, col 8

Humpty Dumpty jibe over sermon

The Archbishop of Canterbury joins critics of the clergyman urging a split church, reports Ruth Gledhill

Dr George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, has accused the Archdeacon of York of speaking like Humpty Dumpty talking to Alice. Dr Carey, in a letter to *The Times* today, says the that archdeacon's analysis of the church as split into liberal and traditionalist warring factions is a case of "cavalier language", as used by Humpty Dumpty to Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*.

The archdeacon, George Austin, called for the Church of England to split in two as the only way to avoid open schism. In his first comment on Mr Austin's sermon at York Minster, Dr Carey insists that the church is not in terminal decline. He demands to know the grounds for the archdeacon's prediction that, within five years, the church's liturgies will address God as "she".

The archbishop's comments are the latest in a series of stinging literary allusions to be directed at the archdeacon by clerical superiors. The Archbishop of York, Dr John Habgood, has said that he reminded him of "the Fat Boy in the *Pickwick Papers* who creeps up on a timid old woman saying, 'I want to make your flesh creep'."

Dr Carey says that the church expects that its leaders will "act and speak

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Iraq threatened, page 11

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A palindrome? One nine nine nine ... no

By NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

WHICHEVER way you look at it, today is special - if a trifle difficult to put into words. Anyone spotted desperately scribbling numerals on scraps of paper or pumping calculators in fevered concentration should be treated with particular sympathy.

They are likely to be suffering from an uncontrolled attack of the palindromes, a strange and compelling search for dates, names and verses that read the same forwards and backwards with unerring precision. Attacks are likely to have been triggered by the sight of the seven-figure palindrome (19.9.1991) magically appearing on breakfast-table calendars across the country, although the abbreviated written version fails to achieve the feat by a single letter.

The obsession, which can strike a Thomas, Richard or Harold just as easily as a Bob, Eve or Hannah, dates back at least to ancient Greece and can be blamed on Sodates, a poet said to have started the mania in the third century BC. 1991 is being celebrated as the year of the palindrome, with today's two-digit offering considered something of a cracker. No other two-digit palindrome will appear "until 11.1.2111, which is in 120 years' time," said Beverley Stott, a mathematician and headteacher of Beechview county middle school in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

There have been many other palindromes dates this century, include such examples as 10.9.1901 and 17.9.1971, but the last version containing only two-digits came 80 years ago, falling on 11.9.1911. "The one we will all be waiting for will be in 221 years," said Mrs Stott. This will be a single-digit beauty, 2.2.2222. That far-off month will also be distinguished by having a single-digit palindrome on the 22nd: this conjunction of two single-digit palindromes dates in a single month last happened, the lay mathematicians say, in January 1111.

At least one mathematically minded member of staff at *The Times* has identified the date of 1.10.2011 as being worthy of inspection.

The phenomenon is not confined to numerals. Words like civic, radar, madam, and deified are all examples. Younger readers with records by Abba and Aha might have spotted the popularity among Scandinavian pop groups for palindromes.

Some particularly smitten individ-

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TODAY IN THE TIMES

LIZA WITH AN M

Liza Minnelli playing a character called Mavis? Hollywood's firecracker snaps back in *Stepping Out* page 15

NURSED BY NAME

The idea that nurses should have names rather than titles pre-dates John Major's approval. But how does the system work? page 13

ATWOOD AS EVER

The new Margaret Atwood supplies no amazement, a few (naughty) surprises and the usual amount of rather wicked life page 14

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Money tumbles in for the arts, and no strings attached



Dame Janet, balancing act for donations

A GROUP of puppeteers who tour the Scottish Highlands and Islands, a cathedral festival in Wales and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art were among 19 arts organisations awarded grants by a new trust yesterday.

Opera singers, ballet dancers, theatres, a book centre and a sculpture workshop will benefit from £2 million provided by the Foundation for Sport and Arts.

The first grants provided by the foundation range from £300,000 towards the modernisation costs of the Theatre Royal in Norwich to £1,500 for the Michael James Music Trust at Wimborne, Dorset, which provides organ scholarships. The grant of £500,000 to the Royal

Leading lights from the world of entertainment have found a cultural use for money diverted from the pools, Richard Ford writes

Academy of Dramatic Art is to help it complete an extension for studios and lecture rooms.

The £10,000 to St David's Cathedral festival in Dyfed is to save the 1992 festival which was in danger of being cancelled because of a lack of sponsorship. An award of £5,000 to the Black Box Puppet Theatre Trust in Argyll will help puppeteers Don and Ivy Smart to take their act to the remotest parts of Scotland.

Welcoming the awards,

Tim Renton, the arts minister, said: "The first list is very exciting. It shows some of the direction in which I hope the foundation is going to move. They recognise the pressing needs of the fabric of some of the arts buildings throughout the country, they encourage creativity and they also encourage more people to take part in the arts."

With the amount of private sponsorship for the arts rising from £500,000 a year to £35 million a year during

the past 15 years, Mr Renton said at the awards ceremony in London that it was important that there should be many sources of funding for the arts.

The idea of a foundation was proposed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year by the football pools operators after ministers came under pressure to set up a national state lottery. It was launched after Norman Lamont cut pools betting duty by 2.5 per cent, freeing about £20 million a year to be split 60 per cent for sport and 40 per cent for arts organisations.

As well as reflecting the need to restore much of the fabric of many arts buildings, the grants also attempt to

produce a geographical and artistic spread in the type of organisations given cash. The task of producing this delicate balance has fallen upon the singer Dame Janet Baker, the film director Sir Richard Attenborough, the theatre director Richard Eyre, the lyricist Tim Rice, two representatives of football pools companies, and representatives from the Arts Council and the government's Office of Arts and Libraries.

The grants announced yesterday were: Theatre Royal, Norwich (£500,000); Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh (£250,000); St David's Cathedral festival 1992 (£10,000); National Youth Orchestra of Wales (£10,900); Rotherham

Civic Theatre (£200,000); Royal Theatre, Northampton (£10,000); Easy Street, Liverpool (£36,000); Broomhill Trust, Tunbridge Wells (£100,000); Haddo House Choral Society, Aberdeen (£5,000); Michael James Music Trust (£1,500); Rada (500,000); Scottish Sculpture Workshop, Lumsden (£35,000); English National Ballet (£150,000); Black Box Puppet Company (£5,000); Edinburgh Puppet Company (£18,000); Opera North, Leeds (£250,000); Scottish Book Centre (£10,000); Tron Theatre, Glasgow (£60,000); English Chamber Orchestra and Music Society (£7,500).

Sports grants, page 38

Wildlife survives vanishing rain forest

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

CUTTING down the tropical rain forest may not have such disastrous consequences on wildlife as many have feared.

Animals, birds and fish all survived almost unscathed in a rain forest that was exploited for timber in Sabah, Malaysia, Andrew Johns of Aberdeen University told a meeting at the Royal Society yesterday. In some areas, 70 per cent of the trees had been cut down, but all the vertebrate species present, including rhinos and elephants, had survived, he said.

Dr Johns was reporting results of the society's seven-year study at the Danum Valley Field Centre in Sabah. "This is a quite surprising finding," he said. "The reason may be that even in heavily logged areas, some tree cover survives on slopes, near streams and in other places where access is difficult. Our evidence suggests that if even 10 per cent of the trees are left, it is enough to preserve all the species."

Clive Marsh, of the Sabah Foundation, said that Dr Johns' results could not be applied to all rain forests.

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Science and technology, p31

Heads reject Labour claims

Independent school headmasters yesterday challenged Labour party claims that government grants for private schooling were going to "distress the gentlerfolk".

Jack Straw, Labour's education spokesman, said that the assisted-places scheme, designed to help able children from poor families to attend independent schools, had been an expensive failure, costing taxpayers £57 million a year. He told the annual meeting of the Headmasters' Conference in Cambridge that only 600 children of manual workers were helped each year, about 10 per cent of the total.

David Smith, chairman of the independent schools joint councils assisted places scheme committee, accused Mr Straw of using "outdated social categories", and said that a third of the 30,000 children on the scheme had their full fees paid, as the family income was less than £8,700 a year. More than half were allowed a grant covering half the fees.

Films tax deal

Labour outlined plans yesterday to give British film-makers tax concessions to help to stem the decline in investment, now at its lowest level for 50 years. The party's green paper proposes allowing companies to write off 100 per cent of investments in film production against tax, and the setting up of a European film studio to be sited in Britain to cater for the growth in joint EC productions.

Visitors held

Two Irish sisters and their brother were being held by police last night after Durham prison staff allegedly found them in possession of a toy gun as they were about to visit Martina Anderson, an IRA member serving a life term. Anderson, a former beauty queen, was jailed for conspiring to cause explosions during a seaside bombing campaign on the British mainland in 1986.

Legal aid move

Children and their parents or guardians will be entitled to free legal aid for the first time in cases where the child may be taken into care when the Children Act comes into force next month. Under changes outlined by the Legal Aid Board, care, supervision, child assessment and emergency protection order proceedings are given a high priority and legal aid given without a means or merit test.

Death charges

Shaun Gooch, aged 24, of Swindon, was charged yesterday on two counts of causing the deaths of five youngsters by reckless driving. Swindon magistrates ordered that Mr Gooch's full address should not be published. Gooch was remanded in custody for seven days and there was no application for bail. Reporting restrictions were not lifted.

CORRECTION

In a leader on 12 September, *The Times* stated that Graham Mather, the general director of the Institute of Economic Affairs, endorsed John Major's candidature for the Tory leadership. As befits the head of a think-tank with charitable status, he did not. We apologise for the error.

Labour opens campaign on NHS as poll fever mounts

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND RICHARD FORD

THE cabinet will today discuss likely election dates amid signs that Labour is again making political headway on the health service.

The discussion will coincide with a Conservative party political broadcast tonight highlighting the "transformation" of Britain in the Eighties. That upbeat message will be underscored by the launch of a campaigning magazine, 80,000 copies of which will go on sale in newsagents across the country.

Labour's accusations yesterday that the prime minister's first full-length speech on the NHS lent credence to its claims that a future Tory government would privatise the NHS threw ministers on to the defensive. They initially responded by denouncing the latest bout of Opposition "scare-mongering" before suddenly switching tactics. The impression remained that Labour, with a £300,000 national poster campaign, had slowed the Tory advance.

Earlier, Downing Street had taken the unusual step of releasing unpublished material from John Major's speech, in which he promised that no self-governing hospital trust would be privatised.

Senior Tory sources then insisted that they would not allow themselves to be drawn into a slanging match on Labour territory and tried to shift the argument back onto the economy. The Conservatives were heartened by Robin Leigh-Pemberton, the governor of the Bank of England, who backed up min-

isters' claims that the recession is ending.

As the pre-election skirmishing intensified, the Opposition unveiled a graphic poster designed to illustrate the "nightmare" of a fourth term of Tory rule. It depicts four human skeletons, supposedly those in the Conservative cupboard, one of which is marked with the label "privatise the NHS".

Cabinet heavyweights sought to snuff out the beginnings of any Labour recovery by turning the heat on Neil Kinnock's record. The vehemence of their attacks served only to heighten the electioneering atmosphere.

Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, branded the Labour leader the "perpetual calendar" and charged the way he had discarded his principles to adapt to the political season.

But the Labour leader shrugged off his recent setbacks and concentrated his fire on Tory plans for the NHS. He denied that the poster was tasteless and insisted that it was in tune with public fears about the eventual fate of the NHS.

Mr Kinnock said that the health service was at the crossroads. The Tory path led to privatisation and the disadvantage of the vast majority of people. Labour offered a modernised service responsive to the community and would channel spare cash into improving the service, not into tax cuts for the best paid.

Ivor Crewe, page 16
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Mermaid purchase: David Heppell, of the natural history department of the National Museums of Scotland, and Pat MacDonald, an assistant, with their recent acquisition, a mermaid, or "ningyo", neatly faked

by 19th-century Japanese fishermen (Nigel Hawkes writes). It is made from a wooden core covered in papier maché. Its tail is wren skin, the head is moulded around a fish jaw and the forelimbs came

from a lizard. Mr Heppell said that the purchase was important for its value "in the history of zoological ideas and the techniques of taxidermy used to construct it". In 1820, a ningyo made in Japan was

brought to London and was subsequently exhibited by the showman Phineas T. Barnum. Mr Heppell's ningyo can be seen at the Royal Museum of Scotland, in Chambers Street, Edinburgh.

Partners against crime advocated

By QUENTIN COWDRY, HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

INNER cities could have further riots if the police do not receive more help from government, local authorities, industry and other agencies in tackling underlying causes of crime, Ronald Hatfield, the chief constable of West Midlands, said yesterday.

With investigations into

the recent mob violence in four English cities still underway, Mr Hatfield called for a "genuine, committed and generously funded partnership to confront urban blight". Factors such as high unemployment, poor housing and the numbers of one-parent families were creating a "feeling of futility" in many urban areas, he said in an address to the international police exhibition and conference in London.

Pointing out that the "partnership approach" could be applied widely in towns and cities, he added: "A failure to act could result in the unacceptable face of civil disorder and violence."

The strong emphasis placed by Mr Hatfield on social and economic factors in fuelling crime will discomfort ministers, in spite of the quiet enthusiasm they are now showing for what some criminologists describe as "social crime prevention". Ministers have claimed that unemployment had little to do with the recent clashes.

● Kenneth Baker, the home secretary, will meet motor manufacturers next week to tell them that they are not doing enough to make cars secure against joyriders. Senior managers from Ford, Vauxhall and Rover, and officials from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders have been called to the Home Office on Monday.

Minimum wage blow for Tories

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

ATTACKS by the government on Labour's policy of a statutory minimum wage suffered a setback yesterday when a new survey showed that most employers support the proposal, and do not believe a minimum wage would either push up pay or increase unemployment.

Embarrassed by the findings of the Institute of Personnel Management report, the government put pressure on the institute to present its conclusions in a way which would do least damage to the Tory line against the minimum wage.

The government tried to intervene directly in the report's presentation yesterday, urging the institute to make clear that it did not formally have a policy supporting the minimum wage.

Michael Howard, the employment secretary, said later: "Having considered the survey which they commissioned, the IPM themselves have made it clear that they do not support a minimum wage."

IPM leaders denied they had been influenced by the government, but Barry Curnow, IPM president, said yesterday of the employment department: "We have a number of conversations all the time with them. We have been talking to them over the last two days."

Fears eased of ageing Britain

By JULIA SHERMAN, SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

THE number of pensioners in Britain is expected to fall in the 1990s for the first decade this century, dispelling the myth of an imminent demographic time bomb, a report published yesterday says.

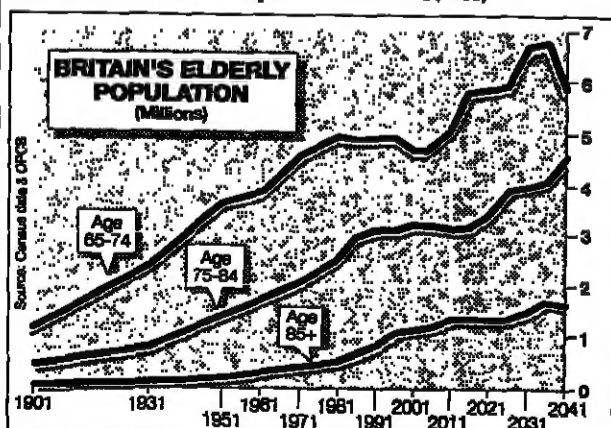
The report from the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry says that the pensioner "bulge" will not affect the economy until the 2020s, when the population over 65 will rise again as the baby boom generation starts to retire. Health and social services will however be affected by a significant rise in the population over 85.

Sixteen per cent of British citizens are now aged 65 or more, compared with 4.7 per cent in 1901, the report says. The proportion will drop slightly over the next 20 years rising to 21.6 per cent of the population in 2036. Depen-

dency ratios — the proportion of the population made up of "non-productive" children and pensioners — stands at 40 per cent in 1991, but is expected to rise by only 1 per cent in the 1990s.

"Undoubtedly there will be economic strains, particularly in the funding of pensions, but there is no real reason to suppose that a modern economy cannot cope with these strains," the association says. "We hear a lot about the demographic time bomb. But the message from our research is that this may not be so potent a threat to advanced Western societies as some commentators have suggested," William Laing, the report's author, said.

The Challenges of Ageing (ABPI, 12 Whitehall, London SW1A 2DY; free)



Charity to feed Soviet book hunger

By RACHEL KELLY

BOOK Aid will be launched in London and Moscow next week with plans to send one million books to the Soviet Union.

The charity is appealing to British publishers and the public to donate books to be distributed to libraries throughout the Soviet Union. The scheme has the backing of President Gorbachev, who discussed plans for the charity during the G7 talks in London in July.

More than 22,000 new books donated by publishers including Penguin, Faber and Faber, Hodder and Stoughton, and Oxford

University Press were flown to Moscow on Tuesday.

Aeroflot, in its new capacity as an independent airline, carried the books from Stansted airport for free, and has agreed to donate its services for the next ten flights. The books arrived at the Library of Foreign Literature in Moscow, which will distribute them to 275 provincial centres in Russia and the other republics under the supervision of the library's director, Vyacheslav Ivanov.

Roger Graef, the filmmaker who set up Book Aid under the auspices of his

existing charity, the Signals International Trust, of which he is president, said: "This has already been an extraordinarily powerful response from British publishers." The Signals Trust was founded a year ago to provide hardware including computers and laser printers to support previously banned writers in the Soviet Union.

"Two years ago I made a film about the Soviet Union which revealed a landscape of cultural oppression," Mr Graef said. "I realised there were no books to read, especially in the provinces.

This is a country where Tolstoy and Dostoevsky are banned. We are trying to fill a most enormous gap."

When Mr Graef saw piles of books abandoned at a country fair in Dorset this summer, he decided to act and contacted Tim Waterstone, chief executive of Waterstone's. Mr Graef said: "Tim agreed to help and called 20 publishers."

The Times has also been supporting the project, and plans are being made for an appeal to readers for books once the first stage of the operation has been successfully completed.

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سكزا من الاصل

Airline challenges rules on sale of cut-price tickets

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH Airways yesterday openly challenged international aviation rules by announcing plans to sell cut-price tickets through high street travel agencies and "bring the bucket shops out of the closet".

Under existing regulations, only those airline tickets for which prices have been approved by officials at both ends of the route can be advertised openly for sale.

Millions of passengers have, however, bought tickets at well below the "official" rates through a small number of agencies, known as consolidators or bucket shops, which buy bulk supplies of unsold tickets from airlines and offer them, usually through small advertisements, to the public.

In an effort to get round the rules, the passenger is often not told in advance which airline will be carrying him.

Now British Airways is to make such tickets available to 7,000 travel agents around the country and openly to display them on their computer reservations systems.

BA said: "As this previously clandestine practice has become an established airline marketing strategy, we believe that discounted seats should be offered to a wider market through the regular travel trade."

Almost every airline has "dumped" its unsold tickets at prices well below the official rate through its own favoured bucket shop operators. They gain at least some revenue on

seats that would otherwise remain unsold, and the customer benefits by having access to tickets that are far cheaper than the official advertised fare.

Aviation regulators have outlawed the practice because, they argue, it could lead to large airlines driving out their smaller competitors by deliberately under-cutting them on selected routes and even forcing them out of business.

Now, faced with the growing public awareness of the tickets' availability and BA's blunt challenge to what is largely seen as a discredited and outmoded law, the regulators may be forced to accept the move as a fait accompli.

Only certain flights at certain times will be subject to the low fares, after the airline has established just how many seats it would not be able to sell at the higher, official, rates. The first such fares, available through the BA Link bookings computer, will be on sale from the beginning of next month.

Transatlantic services, which have suffered a sharp decline because of the recession, will be offered first, with return tickets to New York available for between £250 and £270, at least £80 below the cheapest officially approved Apex fare of £350.

If the move proves successful and the regulators turn a blind eye, it may be extended to many other services.

British Airways made clear that because the number of such tickets would be limited to those flights not already booked with passengers paying the full fare, there would be no guarantee that a potential passenger would be able to buy them for a particular destination or a particular flight. The tickets will also have to be bought 14 days in advance and will have a number of other restrictions attached.

The move took the Civil Aviation Authority by surprise. An official said: "Our basic policy is to ensure that all fares are related to cost and are therefore economic. The rules are clear and state that no British airline may carry passengers at fares which have not been approved by us."

"We were not aware of this move by BA and will be seeking to talk to them about it at the earliest opportunity."

The Association of British Travel Agents described the BA move as "the best news possible for the traveller, who will now be able to buy discounted tickets through an approved travel agent rather than having to go through a bucket shop".

Phone line to fight wildlife poisoning

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

A FREE telephone line has been set up to help to end the illegal use of pesticides to kill wild birds and animals. Calls will be directed to government inspectors, who will investigate immediately.

The campaign, launched yesterday by Tony Baldry, junior environment minister, is aimed at a small number of farmers and gamekeepers who still use poisoned bait to kill foxes, crows and magpies rather than using approved traps and other legal means of controlling the predators.

Mr Baldry said: "Many pets have fallen sick and died, often in front of their shocked owners, though so far no children have been poisoned. We want to remove this risk

for ever." Birds of prey, including rare golden eagles, red kites and marsh harriers, are the most frequent victims, particularly at springtime. About 100 domestic dogs and cats were also poisoned.

Mr Baldry urged rambles and country dwellers to telephone 0800 321 600 if they spotted any signs of illegal poisoning. The line will be manned from 9am to 5pm daily and an answering machine will take messages outside office hours. Illegal poisoners can be fined up to £5,000 or face a prison term.

BIRDS OF PREY POISONED BY PESTICIDE IN UK (1979-1990)

	Breeding pairs (in 1980 unless otherwise stated)	Number killed
Buzzard	12,000-15,000	271
Golden eagle	424 (1982)	31
Kestrel	30,000-50,000	25
Red kite	30,000	16
Sparrowhawk	900 (1985)	10
Peregrine	630	9
Hen harrier	75 (breeding females)	4
Marsh harrier	200	1
Goshawk	4-11	1
White-tailed eagle		



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

MPs back disabled ex-soldiers

By PETER VICTOR

A GROUP of MPs led by Jack Ashley, Labour member for Stoke-on-Trent, South, is renewing efforts to gain compensation for disabled ex-servicemen who cannot sue because of a law which has been repealed.

After a successful campaign to gain compensation for three Grenadier Guardsmen whose legs were blown off during a training exercise in Canada, Mr Ashley has written to Tom King, the defence secretary, calling on the defence ministry to reconsider its attitude to servicemen injured by negligence before the repeal of Section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947.

Before 1986 such servicemen could not sue for compensation. Although Section 10 was repealed that year the provisions of the change in the law were not made retrospective.

Mr Ashley, together with Winston Churchill, Conservative MP for Daventry, campaigned for the repeal and in 1987 tabled an amendment providing for retrospective compensation for deserving cases. The defence secretary said legislation could not be retrospective.

The Times has reported on many of the cases that fell foul of the legislation. They include victims of asbestos-related diseases contracted by former navy servicemen, Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader and a former marine, and John Browne, Conservative MP for Winchester, supported Mr Ashley's initiative.

The defence ministry said last night that Mr King was in the Far East, and added: "We will not pre-empt Tom King's reply."

Art export ban expected

By SARAH JANE CHECKLAND, ART MARKET CORRESPONDENT

EIGHTEEN old master drawings sold at Christie's in July by Viscount Coke, of Holkham Hall, Norfolk, are expected to be banned from export for six months this week by the trade department.

The Reviewing Committee for the Export of Works of Art has given each one a red star, denoting supreme heritage importance. The move, which will give museums a chance to match the drawings' present valuations, results from heavy lobbying by a disgruntled consortium of museums that tried and failed to buy the drawings before the sale.

The drawings are valued at more than £1 million, including £154,000 for *View of the Tiber Valley*, by Poussin, and £143,000 for a delicate drawing of a woman's head by Guido Reni.

When the arts minister, Timothy Renton, approves the committee's recommendations, as is expected, he will set in motion the biggest fund-raising challenge for museums this year.

The collection was amassed by Thomas Coke, later earl of Leicester, during his grand tour of Europe in the 1712, and offered at Christie's this year because of the present Viscount Coke's "revenue problems". Annual upkeep at Holkham Hall amounts to £600,000 a year.

Although the drawings are not the first items to be dispersed from the collection and had been kept in portfolios away from public view, the feeling among heritage lobbyists was that the collection was complete, and should have been kept

as such. After hearing about the prospective auction of 66 drawings — roughly a fifth of the collection — directors of the British Museum, National Galleries of Scotland, Ashmolean in Oxford and Fitzwilliam in Cambridge, jointly raised £1.65 million, which was just above Christie's estimate, and offered it to Viscount Coke.

Timothy Clifford, director of the National Galleries of Scotland, said yesterday: "We felt our bid wasn't taken as seriously as it should have been." Being what is called a private treaty sale, the offer was tax free. In the event, the drawings fetched £3.26 million.

The committee is expected to continue to place export stops on any further drawings from the collection whose owners apply for export licences.



Under review: a landscape by Pietro da Cortona, which fetched £264,000



Shared grief: children comforting each other yesterday at a demonstration in Swindon, Wiltshire, prompted by a crash in which five young people, aged seven to 19, died on Friday. Dozens of parents and children gathered in Akers Way, scene of the crash.

to protest at what they say is a lack of safety. A police spokesman said: "We recognise the deep feelings the local community has about this desperate tragedy." Meanwhile, an inquest into the deaths was opened and adjourned in Swindon.

Kidnap-plot religious fanatics jailed

A YOUNG Muslim couple were in hiding last night, fearing for their lives, after four religious fanatics were jailed for plotting to kidnap them.

The girl, the daughter of a Muslim priest, was kept prisoner in an attic for many months and her lover's brother was murdered after her father disapproved of her affair with a cab driver.

Police said after a Central Criminal Court trial that the pair fear that the priest's disciples will carry out the traditional punishment of beheading because they broke her father's religious code.

The high priest, Abdul Quadir Gilani, Imam of Europe, is now on the run, wanted for questioning about his daughter's imprisonment and the murder of Umar Biloo Farook, aged 19.

Zahira Gilani, aged 21, enraged her father by falling in

love with a man outside his exclusive social circle, Anthony Longdon, for the prosecution, said. The court was told that Zahira met Zia Mahmood, aged 26, in their native Pakistan.

When Zahira asked her father whether she could marry Mahmood, the priest locked her in an attic in his home at Walthamstow, east London. Mahmood told the court that he would wait under her window hoping to glimpse

her. "I began passing letters all year under the bathroom window until she was moved to the house next door," he said.

After her escape, the lovers had a Muslim wedding in secret. The priest ordered followers to bring his daughter back. They traced Mahmood and threatened to kill him and his family. In Pakistan, Mahmood's brother was murdered.

Khadem Hussain, aged 41, of Hemel Hempstead, Hert-

fordshire, Syed Shah, 31, of Leyton, east London, Mustaq Ahmed, 31, of Luton, Bedfordshire, and Shamsu Miah, 31, of Southampton, were each jailed for four years. They were found guilty of conspiracy to kidnap and to do grievous bodily harm. Ghulab Hussain, aged 35, of Stratford, east London, was jailed for two years for threatening to kill the couple. Sabir Hussain, aged 48, brother of the priest, was cleared of threats to kill.

Vicar to appeal after losing adultery case

By PAUL WILKINSON

A CHURCH of England parson was yesterday ordered from his parish after being found guilty of adultery with one of his parishioners.

It was the second time in less than a year that the Rev Tom Tyler, aged 52, vicar of Henfield in West Sussex, and a father of four, had been found guilty on the same charge of conduct unbecoming a clerk in holy orders.

Last November, a consistency court found him guilty on five charges of adultery involving Barbara Edwards, aged 32, a parishioner, and his curate's wife, Susan Whittome, aged 54. But he appealed successfully to the church's court of the arches, which ordered a retrial.

After yesterday's hearing, which dealt only with the allegations involving Mrs Edwards, the vicar's lawyers said that he was very disappointed by the outcome and would be appealing again to the court of the arches. He has 28 days to do so and will remain in his vicarage in Henfield under suspension until the process is exhausted.

The other charges alleging a ten-year affair with Mrs Whittome were ordered to be left on the file and not to be proceeded with except on the direction of the court.

Passing sentence yesterday, the vice-chancellor of the Chichester Diocese, the Rev Rupert Bursell, QC, said: "I bear in mind and accept your previous high good conduct and I accept that in the past you have been an outstanding parish priest. You yourself said that to commit adultery would be a betrayal of your

orders and certainly a dreadful betrayal of Mrs Edwards."

"I believe that is the worst punishment you can have inflicted on yourself and in all the circumstances I have no alternative other than to pass a sentence of deprivation."

Behind Mr Tyler in the public gallery his wife Tricia, aged 48, was comforted by their oldest son Andrew and daughter Claire, aged 21.

Mrs Edwards buried her head in her husband's shoulder. Later, outside the court, she said that she was glad the case was over but her husband Stephen added: "It is not a victory, everybody loses. Mr Tyler is unsafe; he is an evil and wicked man."

The affair began in the summer of 1988 as the vicar comforted Mrs Edwards after the cot death of her ten-week-old son. She had turned to the church for help but the consistency court hearing the retrial before East Chichester magistrates, West Sussex, was told how the vicar's comforting kisses on the cheek and protective arm around the shoulder gradually turned to passionate embraces.

They first had sex in September 1988, and Mrs Edwards said that over the following year they had intercourse on at least a dozen occasions at her home in Henfield. She told the four assessors, who sat as a jury, that she felt dirty after the sex, but still felt comforted by Mr Tyler's presence.

He had denied all her claims and his lawyers produced psychiatric evidence to suggest that she could have been mentally ill with depression over her son's death at the time of the alleged affair.

After the hearing the bishop of Chichester, the Right Rev Eric Kemp, said that investigating the truth of the complaints had been of the greatest importance and although the enquiry had brought "a great deal of unwanted and unhappy publicity", bringing it before a court was the only way they could properly investigate and resolve.

The bishop will now have to consider the question of unfranking Mr Tyler, but that will not be made until after any appeal has been lodged and lost.

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Scottish independence

SNP sets 1993 as target for breaking away from Britain

By KERRY GILL

THE Scottish National Party has set itself a target of achieving independence in Europe within 15 months.

"Scotland free by '93" was the rallying call given to delegates at the annual conference, which began in Inverness yesterday. The party disclosed that 1,000 people had expressed interest in joining it over the past three days.

The nationalists hope to reap 1.5 million votes in the next general election, which would make the SNP the most popular political party in Scotland. It would be no mean achievement after the 420,000 votes attracted in 1987. Alex Salmond, the party leader, said that on its present performance it could expect more than 600,000 votes.

The surge of support over the past few days was a result of the party political broadcast on Monday featuring the actor Sean Connery, who recently backed independence for Scotland. Mr Salmond said that since the broadcast, the party's telephones had hardly stopped ringing with members of the public promising support.

Mr Salmond, outlining the nationalists' new theme, said: "The central message which will emerge from this conference is the transition of the Scottish National Party from a party of protest to a party of power ready to form the government of an independent Scotland after the coming general election."

As part of that transition, the nationalists have adopted a new logo after almost 20

years. The rounded thistle logo has been given a cubist form that, according to the leadership, implies strength, vision and commitment to the quality of life. One wag said that it would not suit some party activists, asking: "How do you quickly paint a squared-off thistle with aerosol can?"

The nationalists' main problem is translating popular support, now at 19 per cent, into votes for their candidates. They have to bridge the gap between that 19 per cent and the 37 per cent of Scots who back independence in some form. The 37 per cent equates to the 1.5 million votes that they want. In the last election Labour won 1.2 million votes, making it the most popular party in Scotland.

The trouble is that the SNP has been seen as a party of protest for too long, having campaigned against payment of the poll tax and the possibility of nuclear waste dumping in the Highlands. Mr Salmond argued that the party now had people able and willing to form an independent government of Scotland and could capitalise on growing support. Alex Neil, a party vice-convenor, said: "We have set a target date for independence, and that date is January 1, 1993. That is the date for the start of the single European market. We cannot afford to go into that with Scotland still a provincial, peripheral part of a disreputable and declining United Kingdom."

Mr Salmond, who was

elected leader last September but whose style of leadership has been criticised as lacklustre, maintained that the nationalists had come to Inverness in a newly confident mood and were ready to fight a general election at any time.

"We are buoyed by rising support in the polls, local government successes and, above all, the highest ever level of support, 37 per cent, for Scottish independence," Mr Salmond said.

"Our target is to persuade those one-and-a-half million Scots who believe in independence to vote for the only party which can, and will, deliver it. Our message to Scots — change now for a better life — is based on the need for real change now as the only way to achieve real improvements in the quality of life of the Scottish people."

Leading article, page 17



Looking sharp: Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish Nationalists, showing off the party's redesigned thistle symbol yesterday to conference delegates

Mackay dashes devolution hopes

By KERRY GILL

AN ATTACK on Labour's proposals for a Scottish assembly and the Scottish National Party's hope for independence within Europe was launched last night by Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, in a speech that ended any prospect of devolution being introduced by the Conservatives.

Lord Mackay's robust defence of the union was delivered in Arbroath, the scene of the 14th-century declaration in which Scottish barons asserted their sovereignty. He said that devolution of power to a Scottish assembly or parliament would encourage the forces of disintegration and separatism.

Attempts by the nationalists and the Liberal Democrats to draw parallels with the emerging Baltic states were not only ludicrous but demeaned the fight for democracy in those states, he said. "Those politicians who have sought to make domestic political capital out of the freedom struggles of the Baltic people have underestimated the ability of the Scottish people to think for themselves."

Lord Mackay said the case for the preservation of the union was stronger than ever. The move towards economic and political integration within the European Community made the need for closer links between Scotland and the rest of the United King-

dom a necessity. He said a Scottish assembly would leave the country with a regional status subject to Westminster in all the most important issues: the economy, defence and foreign affairs.

"An independent Scotland would be a mere bystander on the European stage. As part of the United Kingdom, Scotland commands eight votes on the council of ministers... as a small separatist state, Scotland would at most command only three votes, a major reduction in our influence on European events," he said.

Popular support for the SNP had never reached the level necessary for the party to achieve its ambition of independence in spite of some "brief political summers", he said.

Margaret Ewing, the SNP's parliamentary leader, said: "Lord Mackay is a political Rip van Winkle. He has obviously been fast asleep on the Woolsack for the last few years and failed to notice that Scotland and Europe have moved on by leaps and bounds. I have not heard such a load of dreary predictable hogwash for a long time. It is hypocritical drivel for Tories to welcome the independence of the Baltic states and predict a European Community of up to 30 members but then turn round and tell Scots we are not good enough to be one of them."



Reconstruction: Suzanne Rogers on the train yesterday

Sister relives rail trip to murder

By BILL FROST

THE sister of Lynne Rogers, the teenager found strangled in woodland last week, yesterday helped police to stage a reconstruction of the dead girl's last known movements.

Suzanne Rogers, aged 19, left the family home in Catford, southeast London, drove to Hither Green station and caught a train to Charing Cross. She was dressed in clothes similar to those worn by her younger sister on the day she disappeared.

Once at Charing Cross Suzanne made her way to a coffee shop on the concourse where a man smoking small cigars had been seen waiting before meeting a girl resembling Lynne.

She then walked outside the station and stood near St Eleanor's memorial spire, where shortly after 10am on the day she disappeared, Lynne, aged 17, was seen getting into a C registration blue-grey Vauxhall saloon car.

The body of Lynne Rogers was found beneath bracken beside a lane at Rotherfield, East Sussex, 11 days ago. She

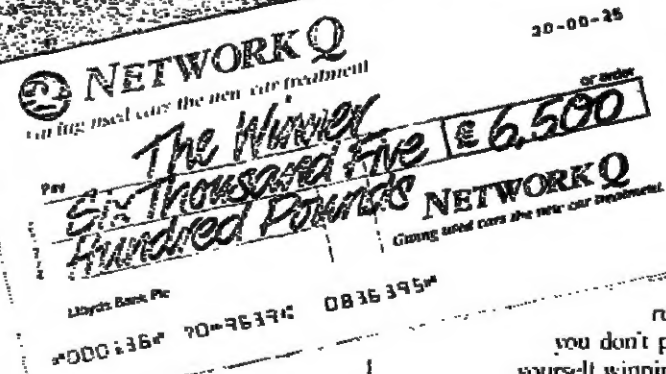
was last seen alive on September 4, the day she travelled from her home to Charing Cross station, to meet a man who had offered her a job.

After yesterday's reconstruction Suzanne Rogers said: "I just hope somebody recognises Lynne, where she was, who she was with, and I hope they get him. I wish he was dead. If anyone has information which may help the police, please just telephone the police and tell them."

Det Supt. Michael Bennison, who is leading the murder enquiry, said yesterday: "This was obviously a very painful experience for Suzanne. But she is as anxious as us to catch this man. We have had over a thousand calls during the two weeks. We are working on some useful leads."

Mr Bennison described Lynne's killer as a calculating and persistent man. "He phoned the family's home on four occasions. He killed her in cold blood and without a motive. We are very anxious to arrest him — he has killed once, he can always kill again."

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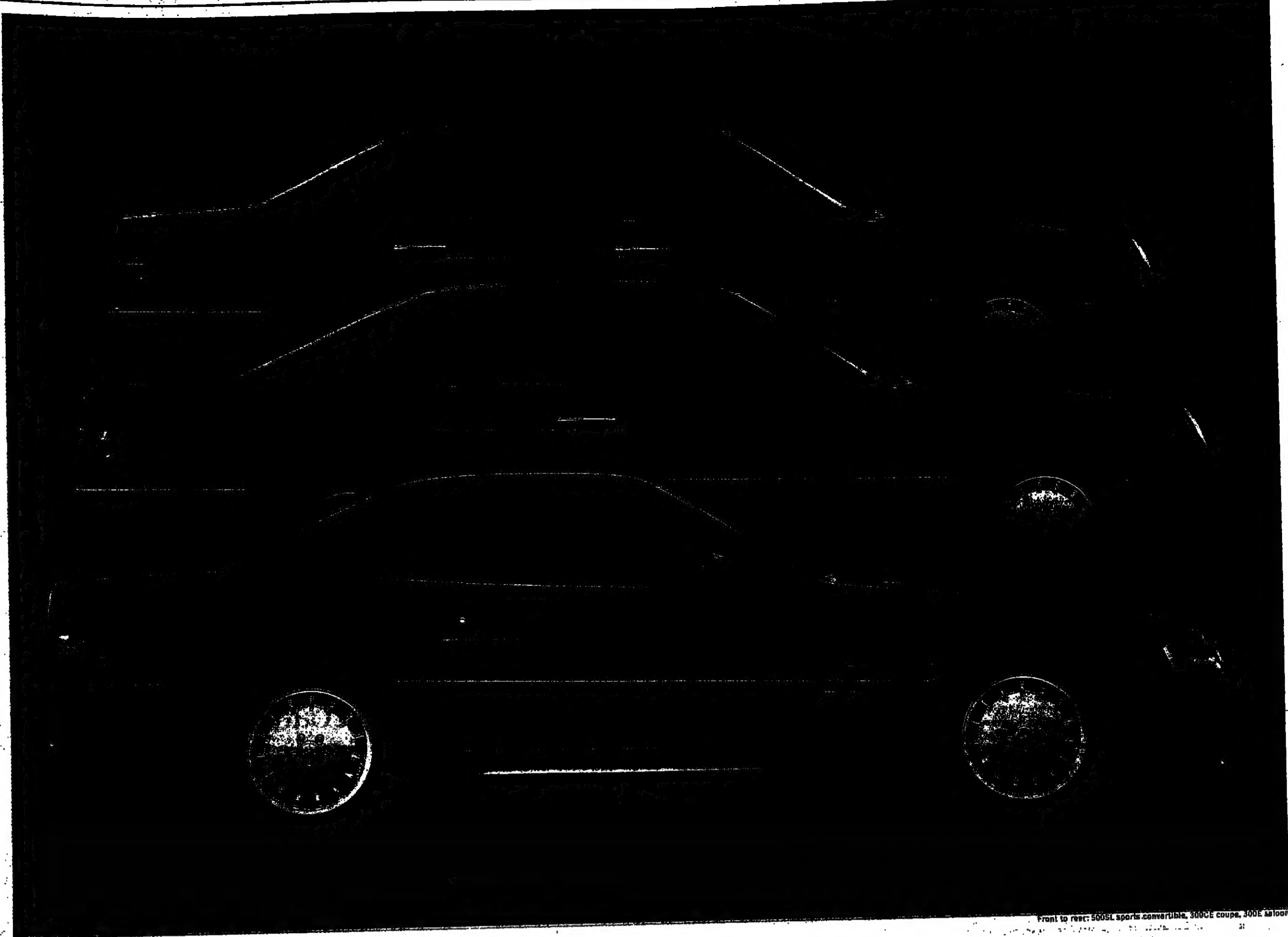
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Front to rear: 300E, sports convertible, 300E coupe, 300E sedan.

Bruno Sacco is a highly quotable man. He is, for instance, very eloquent on the subject of decorative elements on a car and how desirable it is to avoid them. He speaks of the "sculptural purity" of Mercedes-Benz bodies, and how they should be "functional, unobtrusive, yet express a clear dynamic message." You only have to glance at the three cars here to see what he means.

TIMELESS STYLING IS A GOOD INVESTMENT

Sacco heads the design team that produced all three as well as the 190 series and the august S-class. And what he is expressing explains why Mercedes-Benz cars hold their value so well. By resisting shallow trends - by knowing what to leave out - Mercedes cars achieve a timeless freshness that protects your investment at trade-in time.

Car designers, says Sacco, are "applied futurologists." The trick is to produce shapes that will live long and well in the public consciousness. Look closely at any of today's Mercedes models and you'll see more than sculptural beauty, however. Every feature also has a down-to-earth purpose.

"Good design is the art of knowing what to leave out"

Bruno Sacco, Director of Design, Daimler-Benz AG.



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The closed-loop door handle, for example, is not only elegant and ergonomically satisfying to use - it can be a life-saver because it is designed to accept great pulling force after a catastrophic accident. Notice the deeply ribbed rear

light cluster. This is no stylist's whim, but a meticulously profiled functional shaping that deflects dirt and grime. The vertical channelling on the A-pillar which frames the windscreen ensures that rain or washer fluid is kept off the side windows. The stylish protective side mouldings, apart from adding visual coherence to the overall design, do much to shield your car's bodywork from scrapes and knocks.

ART OF THE NECESSARY

Mercedes design acknowledges both scientific imperatives and a wealth of tradition. At Mercedes-Benz, heritage is always an important ingredient; and for Bruno Sacco, an Italian of the Turin school, so is sensuality. Knowing what to leave out is a vital but elusive skill - as important, in fact, as knowing what to put in.

Opposition leader says Aquino guilty of treason

FROM ABBY TAN IN MANILA

JUAN Ponce Enrile, an opposition senator, yesterday called for President Aquino's impeachment on the grounds that she had committed treason in deciding to recall the notice to quit served on the United States over military bases for which the lease agreement has expired.

Mr Ponce Enrile said Mrs Aquino, instead of calling for a referendum to overturn the landmark decision, should gracefully accept defeat on the base treaty that the senate rejected on Monday. Many senators who had voted the treaty down denounced her government's recall yesterday of a termination notice given to America a year ago telling it to leave the bases by September 16, the date the old agreement expired.

The government withdrew the notice the day after the

agreement expired, so allowing American forces to stay for at least another year. "This is downright treacherous," Mr Ponce Enrile said at a press conference, pointing out that there was no provision in the constitution allowing America to stay because there was no treaty.

Mr Ponce Enrile, who once served briefly as Mrs Aquino's defence minister after helping to put her in power in the 1986 military revolt, has become her most bitter critic since being ousted out of her government. He was among the 12 senators who voted against the base treaty. He was charged for complicity in a 1989 coup attempt and the case is still pending.

Claiming that Mrs Aquino had violated the constitution in allowing American troops to remain, Mr Ponce Enrile asked: "Does she adhere to the provision of the constitution? Or is she deliberately violating the constitution and will that not render her liable for impeachment by congress?"

Impeachment of the president must be initiated by the lower house of the Philippines congress. So far only one other congressman, from a minority opposition party, has called for her impeachment. The lower house is dominated by the ruling Philippine Democratic party, which is controlled by Jose Cojuangco, Mrs Aquino's younger brother.

While impeachment proceedings are, therefore, unlikely to prosper, the attack against the president is yet another controversy to add to a long series of mishaps in her handling of the bases treaty.

● **Truce approved:** Renato de Villa, the Philippines defence chief, yesterday approved a truce with communist guerrillas in selected parts of the country in response to a nationwide unilateral ceasefire earlier announced by the rebels.

Mr de Villa told reporters he had authorised provincial battalion commanders to declare a truce in areas where "the initiative for a ceasefire [between government forces and the rebel New People's Army] comes from local residents themselves". The guerrillas, who are fighting for a marxist state and the removal of American military forces from the country, announced their unilateral ceasefire last Thursday, just before the Philippines senate voted to reject the new military bases treaty with America.

Mr de Villa, in a directive to General Lisandro Abadía, the armed forces chief, said provincial battalion commanders in selected areas could declare a ten-day ceasefire "which may be extended not more than twice for another 10 days each". The reason why Mr de Villa, who last week dismissed the rebel ceasefire as a propaganda stunt, approved the limited truce was not clear.

He said local ceasefires had more chance of succeeding than a nationwide truce because conditions varied from one area to another. Testifying yesterday before the senate defence committee, he accused communist leaders of failing to enforce their own ceasefire. (Reuters)

Police are suspected of killings

Cape Town - Twenty-four policemen have been suspended as a result of investigations into political violence in South Africa, including killings on trains and assassinations of leaders of the African National Congress, it was disclosed yesterday (Steven Taylor writes). Major-General Ronnie van der Westhuizen, head of a police investigation unit, told *Business Day* newspaper that they could face charges ranging from assault to murder.

Progress in the investigations had been made with the help of ANC and human rights lawyers in 22 cases, he said. Several would come before the courts in the next few weeks. Not all the cases involved police.

Refugee killed

Aranyapraphet - A Cambodian refugee was killed and eight were wounded, including six children, when Thai troops fired a mortar bomb into a refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border while trying to disperse about 25 bandits around its perimeter, Western relief officials said. The bomb apparently landed in the camp accidentally. (Reuters)

Shuttle lands

Cape Canaveral - The space shuttle Discovery landed in darkness in California after being diverted from its Florida runway because of bad weather. Yesterday's was only the fifth night landing in 43 shuttle flights. Discovery on Sunday launched the world's biggest environmental research satellite. (Reuters)

Kissing banned

Peking - Peking university students have only weeks left to hug, kiss and hold hands on campus. From October 5, they are to be banned as "behaviour that corrupts public morals". Bottle-smashing, booing and whistling, all ways of showing dissent, are also to be banned, as are unauthorised gatherings. (Reuters)

Defender of Brazil rain forest shot

FROM MAC MARGOLIS IN RIO DE JANEIRO

AN AIDE to Chico Mendes, the Brazilian trade union leader and ecologist who was killed in December 1988, was badly wounded in a murder attempt on Tuesday night.

Guaracinda Rodrigues, an agronomist and defender of the rubber-tappers championed by Mendes, was shot three times in the face and stomach by an unknown assailant, who fled into the night. Senhor Rodrigues was about to enter the environment institute in Rio Branco, the capital of Acre state in the western Amazon region, when two men and a woman tried to force him into a car.

Police said they had no suspects, but local news reports linked the attempt to gunmen hired by the region's rubber-tappers. Senhor Rodrigues was taken to hospital and was in a serious condition. Heavily armed troops cordoned off the emergency ward.

The attack came as no surprise to local residents. Ever since Mendes was shot by a rancher, Senhor Rodri-

gues and other leaders of the rubber-tappers have received numerous death threats. Known for his ardent defence of the rubber-tappers of the Amazon, Senhor Rodrigues, aged 32, had developed the habit of carrying a gun and avoiding walking alone after his name appeared on the ranchers' "death list".

In recent years, the rubber-tappers, who make a living gathering rubber latex and brazil nuts, earned the hostility of the region's ranchers for blocking cattlemen from clearing forests to make pastures and farms. The murder of Mendes led to protests around the world by ecologists and human rights groups outraged by the destruction of the Amazon rain forest and the lack of justice in the Brazilian backlands.

In December a rancher and his son were found guilty of the Mendes murder and sentenced to 19 years' imprisonment. But the threats to his successors continued.

Leading article, page 17

Women share award for improving African life

By DAVID WATTS
DIPLOMATIC
CORRESPONDENT

WANGARI Maathai, who founded Kenya's Green Belt Movement, is probably the only environmentalist in the world who has been whipped for campaigning in defence of nature.

From her home in the suburbs of Nairobi she carried on a sort of guerrilla war against a government which regards as subversive anything even remotely critical of its policy.

"People will listen to us," Professor Maathai said, "and that makes the government afraid of us. The police try to intimidate us by preventing the planting of trees in the countryside, and women get so scared they abandon the movement." The legacy of Professor Maathai can be seen all over her native Kenya in the ten million trees which have been planted by her movement.

Today her efforts at greening Kenya are rewarded by the joint award of the 1991 Africa Prize for leadership for the sustainable end of hunger, which she shares with Maryam Babangida, wife of the Nigerian president. The awards mark the first time the \$50,000 (£28,700) prize has been shared by two women.

Professor Maathai's share will be used to set up an endowment to fund cash to her movement. Some aid comes from the United Nations, The Netherlands and Denmark, but Britain gives nothing, apparently for fear



African champions: Professor Maathai of Kenya, left, and Maryam Babangida of Nigeria, who will today share the Africa Prize for leading programmes intended to combat hunger

of giving any offence to President Moi of Kenya.

Mrs Babangida wins the prize for her leadership of Nigeria's Better Life Programme for rural women. The programme is aimed at breaking the cycle of hunger, poverty, ignorance and disease. She has also been a prime mover behind the es-

tablishment of working parties on rural women in various United Nations bodies.

Professor Maathai said the award, for which she had previously been nominated without success, came as a surprise. It is, however, only a small compensation for continuous harassment by the government and her

involuntary divorce from her husband by a judge who, she says, was corrupt or incompetent. Because she has no husband, the government can regard her as immoral.

Seeing the need for urgent action to combat environmental degradation in Kenya, Professor Maathai started the Green Belt Move-

ment in 1977. It recruited about 50,000 women to plant seedlings and distribute and care for trees to help to limit soil erosion and loss of firewood. The planting of trees remains a main source of income for many, and the Green Belt Movement has introduced nutrition and health programmes.

Chinese head of state taken ill

FROM CATHERINE SAMPSON
IN PEKING

LI PENG, the prime minister, disclosed yesterday that Yang Shangkun, aged 84, the president, had been taken to hospital on Tuesday and had missed a state welcome for a foreign visitor.

The president's illness highlights the fact that, despite the Communist party's robust rhetoric, the men in charge of the country are all elderly. The morale of China's leadership, shaken by the collapse of Soviet communism, will be further weakened by this reminder of mortality.

Mr Yang's post as president is mainly ceremonial, but he has day-to-day control of the army and is widely expected to assume paramount power on the death of Deng Xiaoping, the senior leader. Mr Yang, in spite of his age, is considered sprightly in comparison with Mr Deng, who is aged 87.

His indisposition prevented him from attending a welcoming ceremony for Quett Masire, the president of Botswana. Mr Li deputised for him and told the Botswana president that Mr Yang had been taken to hospital because he had a cold. The foreign ministry, contacted later, would say only that the president had a minor ailment. A spokesman declined to confirm that he was in hospital.

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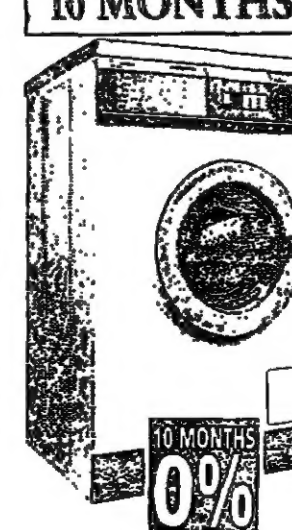
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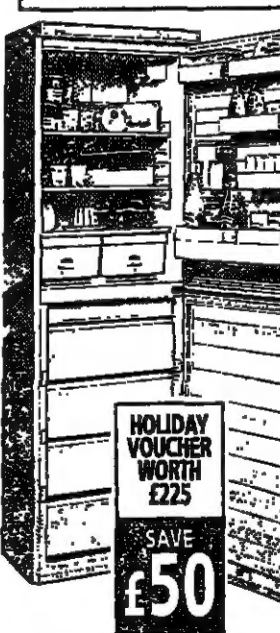
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Generals fear buffer troops would rob Serbia of its conquests



Milosevic said he would defend Serbs everywhere

THE HARDLINE generals of Belgrade, scenting victory in Croatia, will be watching with unease today as the Western European Union considers deploying a buffer force in Yugoslavia. It has become clear that the Yugoslav army is now pressing for the total surrender of the Croats; no ceasefire or peace conference can stop the generals, who believe that only military victory will bring a political solution.

Only the WEU's deliberations seriously affect these calculations, for the peacekeeping force would have to be deployed along the old, legally binding borders, not the Serbian frontier carved out by military conquest this summer. The mere presence of foreign troops would challenge the army's hegemony and dilute its power in occupied Croatia. But if the European union does not act soon, the army will be free to use every means it can to crush the Croatian national

Belgrade's hardline generals, who once talked of defending ethnic Serbs, have now switched to attaining the total subjugation of Croatia, writes Roger Boyes, East Europe correspondent

guard. That is the uncomfortable reality facing Lord Carrington as he seeks to persuade the federal army to return to barracks.

The army has been transformed in a few short months from an army committed to Yugoslav unity, to an army serving the Serbian cause. Even this aim has been refined. Three weeks ago the army sought to secure the notionally threatened Serbian enclaves in Croatia and thus to demarcate the future frontiers of a greater Serbia. Now it is fighting for the total subjugation of Croatia.

General Veljko Kadijevic, the ailing defence minister, is clinging to the idea that has dominated his life:

that the army has the constitutional mission to save Yugoslavia. After the army's humiliating defeat by the Slovene resistance in June, this ideal was modified but not abandoned. Yugoslavia must be rescued, he believes, by the disarming of the Croatian national guard and by a change of heart in Zagreb.

But the driving force of the army campaign is a group of Serbian generals who have discarded the concept of Yugoslavia in favour of a "greater Serbia". Professor Anton Bebler, an adviser to the Slovene leadership, has analysed the officer corps which should, according to the constitution, be in proportion to the

country's ethnic composition. In fact, 70 per cent of the army's generals are either Serbs from Serbia, or Serbs who give their nationality as "Yugoslav" or "Montenegrin". Over 80 per cent of colonels are from these groups, and 70 per cent of lieutenant-colonels. There are 15 to 20 generals, identified by Professor Bebler as protégés of Admiral Branko Mamula, the former defence minister, who are Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia whose families suffered at the hands of the Croatian Ustashi during the war. Their influence now stretches deep into the political administration — the communist political officers — and military intelligence. They apparently take orders from the chief of staff, General Blagoje Adzic, who lost more than 40 of his relatives to the Ustashi.

The collapse of communist rule left the political officer corps only

with their Serbian nationalism. After the defeat in Slovenia, it was also clear that there was no future in a multinational army. Albanians, Croats and Slovenes deserted in droves and continue to do so.

Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia have all refused to send recruits to the army and Bosnia insists that reservists should not be deployed outside Bosnia. The army rank and file is therefore almost dominated by the Serbs.

Reassuring the demoralised army after the debacle in Slovenia, General Adzic promised on Belgrade television that "we will establish control and carry things through to the end". Since the speech coincided with a statement by Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Serbia, that Serbia would defend Serbs everywhere, it was plain that "the end" meant war against Croatia, not a new assault on Slovenia, where there is no Serb minority.

A chronology of ceasefires
 June 28: Federal government unilaterally announces a ceasefire at 3 pm in Slovenia.
 June 29: Ceasefire holds in Slovenia, but fighting erupts between Serbs, Croats and the Serbian-led army in Croatia.
 August 7: Ceasefire in Croatia is declared by the eight-member state presidency.
 August 21: Collective state presidency and presidents of the six republics work out a four-point ceasefire.
 September 2: Yugoslav republics including Serbia agree to a European Community-sponsored ceasefire.
 September 9: EC says it has deployed ceasefire monitors in Croatia war zone.
 September 17: Leaders of Croatia, Serbia and the Yugoslav army sign a ceasefire deal with EC peace envoy Lord Carrington.
 September 18: Noon ceasefire shattered in Croatia.

Zagreb lives on its nerves amid hail of rumour and gunfire

FROM JOHN FULLERTON IN ZAGREB

MARTIAL music and syrupy patriotic songs gush from the radios, punctuated by gunfire. Red-eyed from lack of sleep, residents of the Croatian capital return once more to bomb shelters as the air-raid sirens sound just 15 minutes before the noon start of an EC-brokered ceasefire.

Waiters, office workers, housewives with shopping bags and students huddle in their basements and underground garages, crowding around transistor radios for news. Six young women from a Soviet dance troupe — who perform topless in a hotel nightclub — quietly get on with their knitting in one shelter.

"We are not all that frightened," says Olga, aged 23, from Kiev.

After a night of sporadic shooting in and around the city, rumours are rife: the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav army is about to attack Zagreb with scores of helicopter gunships; planes dropped cluster bombs at night.

The frequent radio news bulletins are read quickly, like weather reports. They are almost impossible to verify. "This is the last chance for Croatia and Yugoslavia to avoid total war," the radio reports Croatian leaders as saying in a statement. As it read out, a single burst of

automatic gunfire echoes across the city.

Journalists touring the deserted streets find little visible damage from overnight exchanges of gunfire in and around two army camps besieged by Croat fighters. One school's upper floors have been hit by what appear to have been stray rounds from a heavy machinegun.

The worst damage is at the army headquarters in the city. The walls are splattered with bullet holes, and many windows have been shattered by gunfire. Inside, the deputy commander of the fifth army district — incorporating Zagreb and western Croatia — serves coffee to his visitors.

General Andrija Raseta, grey-haired and dressed in crisply ironed fatigues, gives the army's version of the night battle. "It was a co-ordinated attack against our bases by Croatian national guards and police," he says. "The aim was to put our backs to the wall."

He knows of only one military casualty. Sergeant Josip Segovic, who he said died from loss of blood when Croats allegedly fired on the ambulance brought in to take him to hospital. "We only return fire," General Raseta claims.

Another casualty was a Danish member of the European Community mission in Zagreb. General Raseta says he was shot in the leg on the steps of the headquarters and had to crawl to safety. Croats blame General Raseta's soldiers for the violence.

Just before noon, General Raseta — who has been trapped in his headquarters for two days — says he has been assured by the Croatian authorities that all shooting would cease. "But I know of two places — Gospić and Varazdin — where our troops are still under attack," he says. Like everything else here, this is difficult to confirm.

But by 1pm (1100 GMT), shooting is continuous, and this time it is coming from central Zagreb. Bullets whizz across a central square, just outside the railway station and main post office. Tires screaming, motorists try to speed to safety.

Pedestrians, emerging from their shelters after the all-clear, throw themselves flat on the pavement. The war of nerves goes on. (Reuters)

Bernard Levin, page 16
 Diary, page 16



Time of anxiety: Croats wait for the all-clear in a Zagreb shelter where they sought refuge after an air-raid warning just before yesterday's ceasefire deadline

Russian parliament meets to make crucial decisions

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

THE distinctive white marble Russian parliament building, the focus of resistance during last month's coup, was again a hive of activity yesterday as deputies, government ministers and republican leaders gathered to prepare for the new session opening today.

But Boris Yeltsin, the president of the Russian Federation and hero of the resistance, who was to deliver the keynote speech, was mysteriously cancelling meetings amid reports that he had been taken ill. The nature of his indisposition was not entirely clear, although his secretary was reported to have said that he was suffering from a minor heart complaint and had taken a day off work.

Mr Yeltsin is known to suffer from a heart ailment, has back trouble and is reportedly prone to mild depression. Like many Soviet politicians this summer, he has not had

time for the month-long break Russians rely on to rebuild their strength for the winter. In the past, however, he has shown a Gorbachev-like facility for ducking awkward political assignments and, even after his glorious summer, the Russian parliament as an institution is itself still not in particularly good health.

Before the summer recess the parliament was unable to agree on the election of a new chairman and lurched from draft measure to draft measure, achieving very little. The autumn session is crucial because it should show whether, in the more propitious post-coup circumstances, Russia is capable of functioning as a democratic state or is still a sickly creature of the defunct Soviet Union.

On its provisional agenda, which must be approved today, are Mr Yeltsin's policy statement, a report on food

supplies throughout the republic and a report on the state of the budget for the first nine months of the year. The parliament is also to discuss the prospects for the new union treaty — now undergoing thorough revision — Russian representation in the new national parliament, to be made up of delegated members of republican parliaments, and a progress report on the republic's new constitution.

● **Silayev's move:** Ivan Silayev, the Russian prime minister, has decided to move permanently to the central economic administration and resign his post in the Russian Federation.

Last week Mr Silayev said he would leave the centre's four-man interim economic committee after accusations that, as Russian prime minister, he was neglecting the interests of the other republics.

British officials said a force would also need an "international mandate" from a body such as the European security conference, the CSCE, and that deploying troops would have to contribute towards a lasting solution of conflicts which date back to the Middle Ages. One British official, asked what were the chances of these conditions being met, replied: "Not high."

Whitehall sources emphasise the practical problems any military force would encounter. Serbs and Croats are intermingled in many areas to such an extent that even after several weeks of fighting no simple front line has developed between them. EC officials closely involved in Yugoslav mediation are also doubtful about armed intervention. "I do not see the basis on which we could intervene militarily or the political will to do it," said one official.

● **Boat:** Border disputes be-

Afghan rebels for Moscow

Moscow — For the first time since fighting began in Afghanistan, leaders of the mujahedin guerrillas fighting the Kabul government are to come to the Soviet capital to discuss ways to implement the Soviet-American agreement on a peace settlement (Michael Binyon writes).

Moscow is to propose regional ceasefires where fighting is fiercest and will urge the release of up to 100 Soviet prisoners the mujahedin still hold as pawns in a power struggle between factions.

Nikolai Kozmyev, the ambassador at large who led the Geneva negotiations that resulted in the Soviet troop withdrawal, said the invitation to Moscow went out last week.

● **Maradona fined**
 Naples — A Naples court has convicted Diego Maradona, the Argentine football star, on charges of possession of cocaine and gave him a 14-month suspended jail sentence. He was also fined 4 million lire (£1,800). He has remained in Argentina since he returned there in disgrace last April. (Reuters)

● **Pope's aide weds**
 Rome — Monsignor Wolfgang Berka, aged 36, considered the second most senior official in the Vatican and privy since 1988 to some of the Pope's most secret letters, has resigned to marry a German woman he met in Brazil in 1987. The Vatican said it was highly unlikely that he would break the Pope's confidence.

Georgians turn to repentant sinner for their salvation

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN TBILISI

AS SUPPORTERS of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the Georgian president, desert him after growing charges of autocratic rule, the members of the once docile parliament are turning to Tengiz Sigua, the former prime minister of the republic.

In the half-century, half-tragic political turmoil in the young republic, Mr Sigua has been young to bare the sins of the government that he once served and in so doing is becoming an important power broker. Mr Gamsakhurdia, who was elected Georgian leader in May with 86 per cent of the vote, on the other hand is increasingly looking alienated.

Mr Sigua is well aware that the turmoil could move into a new phase if today's session of parliament tries to force the president to compromise with the opposition — two of whose leaders have just been arrested — or strips him of some of his draconian presidential power. Mr Sigua, a 56-year-old engineering professor, is currently under the protection of Georgia's national guard at its temporary base — a former resort of the Soviet Communist youth movement outside Tbilisi.

The bulk of the national guard — a force which claims to have 630 Soviet army-trained officers and an undisclosed number of troops — has slipped out of the Georgian president's control after his move, under pressure from the organisers of last month's putsch in Moscow, to disband the force which he had created in January.

Mr Sigua, sacked shortly before the coup, disclaims any ambitions to take over as the republic's new leader, even on a temporary basis. "Georgia may be short of food and industrial products after the terrible mistakes that have been made economically in agricultural policies, but it has no shortage of talented potential leaders," he said.

In spite of Mr Sigua's modesty, few revelations have been so damaging for the reputation of Mr Gamsakhurdia, who was triumphantly elected on a wave of nationalism, as the allegations made by Mr Sigua of what he knew about the government's behaviour during and before the August 19 putsch. Mr Sigua is convinced that senior Georgian officials had paid a flying visit to Moscow on the eve of the coup on August 18 and consulted the coup conspirators.

The former prime minister maintains that on the pre-

vious evening, while he was in the government building clearing his desk, he came across the two officials in question holding a conspiratorial meeting with most of the senior officers of the Georgian KGB. All this, Mr Sigua argues, would explain the indecent haste with which the Georgian government promised the Kremlin conspirators that the national guard would be merged with the republican police, or in effect disbanded.

The commander of the Georgian guards, Tengiz Kentovani, refused to obey and took his men to a new base outside Tbilisi. According to Mr Sigua, officials of Moscow's defence ministry threatened to annihilate the recalcitrant guardsmen "in 15 or 20 minutes" — which could only mean bombing their base.

Talking to the young guardsmen, brandishing sheath knives to battered Kalashnikovs and who are guarding Mr Sigua, one gets an impression of the speed with which the Georgian president's popularity has fallen. As Mr Sigua bides his time, the men are drilling, while supporters and opponents of the president hold furious arguments in the central avenue of Tbilisi.

Leading article, page 17



Back in harness: Eduard Shevardnadze finds a new role in reshaping Soviet foreign policy

Reforms heal Gorbachev's rift with old ally

FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN MOSCOW

EDUARD Shevardnadze remains by far the most influential figure in Soviet foreign policy. He sees President Gorbachev almost daily and is playing a key role in planning under way on shedding the Soviet Union's superpower status.

"Mr Shevardnadze meets Mr Gorbachev often on an individual basis and in groups," Pavel Paleshenko, a senior adviser on the new presidential staff, said. "They were always very close in their thinking. Now they are working on the changes in foreign policy."

Mr Paleshenko, a former arms control expert who has been in the public eye for some time as an interpreter for both men at summits, said that Mr Shevardnadze now enjoyed good personal relations with Mr Gorbachev. Some aftertaste remained of his bitterness at

feeling politically abandoned last winter [when he was forced to resign as foreign minister]. However, the two men were now working on a post-imperial policy to reduce Soviet commitments overseas, concentrate on improving relations with neighbours and lighten the burden of "imperial overstretch".

They recognised that the Soviet economy could not afford the high military spending of a world superpower role. Shedding this would be painful, Mr Paleshenko said. Many people had become attached to superpower status.

The country now had to pull in its horns. This meant cutting the foreign ministry by up to 50 per cent, reducing Soviet involvement in distant countries such as Australia and Argentina, possibly closing many embassies in Africa and concen-

trating on ties with Eastern Europe, the Baltic states, China, Japan and countries where Soviet interests lay.

"The reorganisation may be painful," he admitted. Conservatives still resented the loss of empire, but the power of the army, the KGB and the party to delay change had been broken.

Hungary and Czechoslovakia were ready to make a fresh start, and would realise that their markets lay more in Russia than in the West, though some countries might turn their backs for a while on their former colonial masters.

Mr Paleshenko said the lowering of Soviet aims would find an echo in the United States and could help post-Start disarmament negotiations, although nuclear weapons on both sides would remain for the foreseeable future as a guarantee of dem-

ocracy. Mr Gorbachev still clung to a vision of a nuclear-free world, but this was a long-term hope, depending on the establishment of democracy worldwide and a strengthening of the United Nations.

Efforts to concentrate Soviet nuclear weapons in Russia were now unlikely; the leaders of the Ukraine, Belorussia and Kazakhstan were insisting on retaining their weapons. Mr Gorbachev has insisted these should be under a unified command, but there was no point discussing the details now.

Mr Paleshenko said that, with the moves to withdraw Soviet troops from Cuba, retraction was now virtually complete. The problem of the Kurile islands, the key to better relations with Japan, had been handed over to Russia, and Mr Gorbachev was content to let Boris

Yeltsin, the Russian Federation president, tackle this.

The task now was to change the Soviet foreign ministry to reflect the country's looser structure. Many diplomats would be retired and several senior ambassadors would be sent to Soviet republics to help them set up fully functioning foreign ministries. These in turn would supply many diplomats for future Soviet embassies abroad, which would be more like European Community missions, staffed by representatives drawn from all member states.

Mr Paleshenko said Boris Pankin, the new foreign minister, should not be underestimated. "He is a free thinker, not dogmatic." The job of redrafting Soviet policy would be difficult for anyone, but Mr Pankin was likely to grow in stature and experience.

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NEW

A new name for nurses

The 'patient's charter' will usher in an era of customised nursing. Heather Kirby assesses the pros and cons

What is a "named" nurse? What she is not is a sweet young thing in a starched uniform and black tights who will approach a hospital bed with a "Hi, there, I'm your nurse, Betty, and I will be looking after you during your stay".

The idea of the named nurse, which the prime minister promised this week will become a reality in the patient's charter, is widely welcomed by the nursing profession. They say that it will help to kill off the image of nurses as mere ministering angels or doctors' handmaidens and give individual nurses more accountability and more responsibility. But what will it do for patients?

The system, which has been known in the United States since the 1960s, has already been introduced in some private and National Health Service hospitals here as "primary nursing". Lin Merritt, the matron of the BUPA hospital in Portsmouth, which introduced primary nursing two years ago, says that a named nurse is responsible for a group of patients from before they are admitted until they are discharged. "She will write to invite the patient to the hospital to meet her and her team and talk over what is going to happen. She has a deputy and the number of nurses depends on the number of patients they have to look after. They produce a written care plan."

Lynn Batchup, the director of the Nursing Development Unit at Dulwich Hospital, southeast London, where a primary nursing programme is being piloted, says the system means patients never need to complain that they do not see the same nurse twice.

"Traditional nursing was very bitty and fragmented," she says. "Now the primary nurse, who will have five or six patients in her care, takes direct responsibility for all their needs. It is dramatically different, there is more job satisfaction and patients know who to blame or who to discuss things with."

The named nurse will talk over with relatives a patient's post-operative needs and she will have the satisfaction of seeing her patient make progress. It is also more satisfying to the patient, who doesn't have to explain everything all over again to a new face.

"Primary nursing makes for a more stimulating working environment because nurses have a closer relationship with the patient," Ms Merritt says. "A named nurse consults and discusses treatment with the doctor; it is a partnership, she is no longer the doctors' handmaidens carrying out instructions."

The primary nurses at Dulwich do not wear uniforms, in order, Ms Batchup says, to reduce barriers



A new image of nursing care: Suzanne Brown with a patient on Byron ward at Dulwich Hospital, London

between patient and nurse. "Some people may think we sacrifice authority and that patients find a uniform reassuring, but it is up to the nurse to demonstrate her ability."

The named nurse concept is going to be adopted by midwives, although some health authorities say it presents difficulties, especially for London hospitals with patients referred from a long way away. Queen Mary's, at Sidcup, Kent, which has been running a pilot scheme, has six teams consisting of 12 or 13 midwives who manage 3,600 deliveries a year. Members of a team rotate between the hospital and community ante-natal and post-natal clinics. This means, according to Sue Sauter, the deputy maternity services manager, that no mother should see more than four midwives during her pregnancy. "We

prefer to talk about a named team rather than one individual. Because a midwife has to have days off and a holiday, a patient could not possibly see the same person over a nine month period," Mrs Sauter says. "The team leader organises her own team so that their specialist skills are spread around the area. The teams are known just by a number — the consultants wanted to give them the names but we said 'no'. We weren't going to have consultants thinking 'this is my team'."

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) says it has been lobbying for years to have nurses' status changed and welcomes primary nursing as a breakthrough. However, it warns that the wholesale introduction of named nursing will require major surgery. Steve Wright, a consultant nurse in

the Nursing Development Unit at Thameside Hospital, Manchester, and a member of the RCN Council, feels that the training of nurses will have to be changed in order to teach them to manage a team. "Also, their relationship with the patient will be more intimate... but what if the patient doesn't want that? They will have to be taught to cope with different approaches with different patients. A nurse's role now is dealing with tasks like taking blood pressure, rather than dealing with people. If she identifies problems she will need the skills and resources to solve them. She will also be easily targeted if things go wrong. Rather than being able to hide in the system. We welcome that, getting the compliments as well as the complaints, but named nurses is not going to be an easy concept to implement."

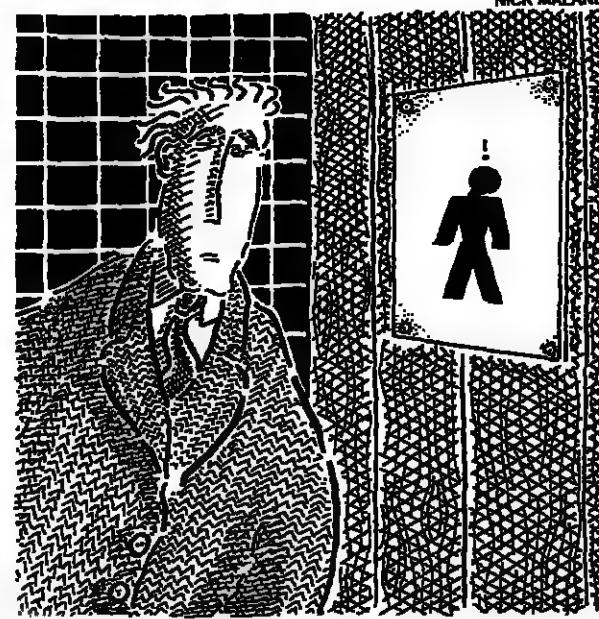
MEDICAL BRIEFING Dr Thomas Stratford

Youthful incontinence

ALTHOUGH incontinence is mainly a problem for the elderly — 30 per cent of those in old people's homes are incontinent — it does not affect only old men with weak bladders and large prostates, or women whose pelvic floor has been ravaged by childbirth. Fifteen per cent of women aged between 18 and 22 suffer from incontinence and one in three who have had children thereafter have problems when undertaking strenuous exercise.

Both *Mims* magazine and *Pulse* have recently discussed the problem of incontinence, but as they were coming off the press the Committee for Safety of Medicines warned that Micturin, one of the standard treatments for incontinence, was suspected of causing a heart irregularity — ventricular tachycardia of the Torsade de Pointes variety — and the drug was withdrawn. Torsade de Pointes tachycardia was hitherto rare, and usually associated with a congenital defect.

Seventy thousand patients in Britain were taking Micturin before it was withdrawn, and since the drug's introduction 440,000 have been treated with it in the United Kingdom and about two million worldwide. Only eight of these patients have, possibly, died from a cardiac



arrhythmia, but even in those a direct link to the drug is difficult to prove as elderly patients are not only prone to incontinence but also to heart disease which might, independent of any treatment, lead to a fatal arrhythmia.

Patients no longer prescribed Micturin should not be given another anticholinergic drug until the Micturin has cleared the body. This takes from two to six weeks. However, *Pulse*

has good news for the incontinent. Two-thirds can be helped and half cured with appropriate treatment. Incontinence varies according to the cause, which may range from minor urinary tract infection to severe neurological disease: women who have been left with a prolapse after childbearing, for instance, would benefit from exercise if it is minor, surgery if it is more severe. Ditropan is likely to fill the role held by Micturin.

Mad about a subject

THE mad professor, detached from everyday life, hopeless in his interpersonal relationships, at odds with society over his failure to observe its conventions, but with a pedantic and encyclopaedic knowledge of some obscure subject, was a stock character in films 50 years ago. At the same time an Austrian psychiatrist, Hans Asperger, described a syndrome, now bearing his name, of this type of personality. Cambridge University Press is due to publish a book this autumn by Dr Uta Frith on autism and Asperger's syndrome.

The symptoms of Asperger's syndrome, which may be a variant of autism, are well known. However, patients suffer ridicule because it is not often regarded as a medical condition, but merely as the quirks of a tiresome personality. If a patient with Asperger's syndrome is dedicated to a subject which is accepted as being relatively

academic, the spiders of East Anglia for example, he may be hailed as an eccentric but difficult genius, but if his life is devoted to the trivial, a study of milk bottle tops perhaps, no excuses are made for him.

Part of the syndrome is the possession of a difficult, detached manner, a lack of any humour, particularly over his chosen subject, an absence of the social graces and an inability to communicate easily.

There is no cure, but its recognition would make life easier for its sufferers and their families.



Burning off a man's sperm

A RECENT Israeli study, published in the *Archives of Andrology*, has confirmed that heavy smokers have a lower sperm count than non-smokers, and that the reduction is proportional to the number of cigarettes smoked. The good news for smokers is that the sperm, although fewer in number, have not lost any of their sprightliness and that they

are as motile and equally good at penetrating the ovum as those of non-smokers. In consequence, smokers seem to be as fertile as non-smokers. Another Israeli report, in *Pulse*, has shown that sperm's performance can be improved by boosting kinase C, a seminal enzyme protein, with an, as yet, unnamed drug which is now being tested for safety.

Helping to keep the body politic in trim

If fitness to govern were judged by attendance at the House of Commons gymnasium, then — on the basis of proportional representation on the exercise bicycles over the summer recess — the parliamentary rump of the SDP would be the winner of the next electoral race. So says Vicki Rose, the manager of the Westminster gymnasium, which serves both Houses of Parliament and staff of the Palace of Westminster.

Miss Rose, aged 26, who puts politicians through their paces at London's most exclusive and security-conscious gym, numbers Rosie Barnes the Social Democratic Party member for Greenwich, among her most regular clients, together with Paddy Ashdown, the leader of the Liberal Democrats and Archie Kirkwood, the Liberal Democrat MP for Roxburgh and Berwickshire.

"I don't think I have ever seen a health minister in here, except, perhaps, for photo-opportunities," Miss Rose says. At least not since Edwina

Is the Westminster gymnasium the place to see a politician sweat?

Currie's days in the old and much smaller gym which, the joke went, was barely big enough to swing a vote. And Mr Ashdown, she says, is the only party leader she has ever seen in the gym — although Norma Major has been down to have a look at it. "David Owen couldn't come — he's got knee problems," says Mrs Barnes loyally.

Although Conservative MPs — such as Sir James Spicer and Hugh Dykes, who were instrumental in founding the gym — far outnumber those of any other party, Mrs Barnes's attendance means that 33 per cent of SDP MPs are fighting fit — as compared with 20 per cent of Liberal Democrats and about 15 per cent of Conservatives.

Miss Rose feels that the general fitness level of Labour MPs, as assessed in the tests the gym insists upon before working out an exercise programme — was poorer than

that of their Conservative colleagues. "I'm not saying the Conservatives are more fit to govern", a diplomatic Miss Rose adds hastily. "Just that they're fitter in the gym."

John Smith, the Shadow Chancellor, who did a "progressive programme" after his heart attack, and Dave Nellist, the MP for Coventry South East, are, she says, the two who best represented the Labour party's endeavours. Mr Nellist said he had gone only "five or six times over the summer" and that "most of the time my only exercise is getting up and down and up and down at Question Time, trying to be noticed".

Mrs Barnes is one of only three women out of the 65 MPs who have used the gym since it moved to its spacious new site in the Norman Shaw Buildings in Whitehall last December. Conservatives Dame Janet Fookes, MP for Plymouth, Drake, and Ann Winterton, the member for Conington, are both regular users, and have kept up their attendance over the recess, but no women are among the "seven or eight" peers who keep in shape at the gym.

Some MPs, such as Mr Dykes, the Conservative MP for Harrow East, and others whose constituencies are in the London area, try never to miss a week. "I usually manage once or twice a week for an hour and a quarter," Mr Dykes says. "I've done the same routine for the 15 years and never vary it. At my request they play soothing classical music instead of that raucous rock."

If members of government are too busy to make use of the facility, their aides certainly do. Emma Hedges, who works for Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Solicitor General, has used the gym since it moved to its new location, and Ian Fisher, a Treasury civil servant, has worked out three or four times a week for two and a half years. "I can come in my lunch break," he says. "but I



Muscling in: the SDP's Rosie Barnes gets fit for government

suppose the politicians can't." The gym is open from 7.30am until 8pm, and is run by Fitness For Industry, which also runs the fitness clubs in Fort-Crest hotels and for other major companies. Miss Rose and her two colleagues, Nick Evans and Ian Handsforth, all have "sports and leisure degrees".

There are six exercise bicycles, including one with a video screen between the handlebars in order to give the impression of cycling up an American mountain. There is a good assortment of Polar Ultra weight machines, three Concept II rowing machines

and a Gyro rower, a sauna, solarium and a treatment room for physiotherapy and massage. Surprisingly there are no television screens showing what is going on in the House, but Miss Rose says there are plans to install them. "We do have division bells," she says.

The joining fee is £30, which includes the fitness assessment, and membership is £179 for the year. Six and three-monthly memberships are also available as are £3 vouchers for those who have joined to have one-off sessions. Mrs Barnes spiritedly dis-

putes the need for fitness assessments. "Some of these young men just whizz through it — but do they take account of the fact that I'm 45 and have had three children? I feel I have tremendous stamina. I keep going from early in the morning until late at night. I'd say I'm a sturdy, fit person, and just because I don't conform to their ideal body type doesn't mean I'm unfit."

Certainly Mrs Barnes does not seem out of breath after going through her routine of floor exercises, weight-training, bicycling, fast-walking and rowing. "My weight seems under control," says the former SDP spokesperson on health and education, "and I'm sure that if I kept coming I might even lose weight. I must say that I've begun to dislike it less than I used to."

Mr Ashdown is usually singled out as an example of parliamentary fitness, but the former Royal Marine commando officer says: "I'm not a fitness fanatic. I happen to have been doing it all my life, but I'm not a proselytiser about it. Orde Wingate, the British Second World War general who believed that 'the only answer to penetration is counter penetration', who is one of my heroes, said that 'a man is either his own physician or a fool at 30'. My office knows very well that if I'm getting crotchety or bad-tempered they must send me off to the gym, and something of a fitness culture has built up within the Liberal Democrats. The whole of our Whip's office and all of my staff go."

Does he think more MPs should spend more time in the gym? "Absolutely. Then they'd spend less time in the Chamber and the country would be better governed."

Although spouses are allowed to use the facilities, Jane Ashdown is not likely ever to be among them. "My wife believes exercise is thoroughly bad for you," Mr Ashdown says. "I know of people who are just as active and have sharper brains than mine and do none at all."

VICTORIA MCKEE

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Wicked life after death

Victoria
Glendinning on
elegiac but funny
stories of the
way we live now
and lived then

She's very good, but we've heard it all before. Even the settings and situations are familiar from her previous volumes of stories — memories of Canadian summer camps, canoe-trips, student affairs or non-affairs, the opportunistic lust of academic males for their students. Margaret Atwood is remarkably consistent in her practices and purposes.

This coherence is handy for critical studies of her work, but not so much fun for general readers, who long for authors to amaze them. She does supply surprises, usually nasty ones, but the horror seems as defiantly gratuitous as the ovarian tumour sent to an ex-lover in a box of chocolate truffles in her story "Hairball". The expression "a body of work", or even a "corpus", is apt in the case of Margaret Atwood. So much has died.

There are two disinterred corpses in this new collection of stories — one a leathery bog man dug out of a peat field in Scotland, the other the young sailor from Franklin's expedition to search for the North-West Passage, discovered fully dressed and deep frozen in the permafrost of the Arctic. Both stand as metaphors for dead relationships that live on in the mind, to be picked over and reinterpreted.

The bog man may have met his end as a sacrifice to the gods, just as the young woman student had sacrificed herself to the desire of the archaeologist. "The idea of human sacrifice is one thing, but the leftovers are something else again." The central characters in all these new stories are leftovers. Atwood's method is to disinter the past, uncovering the strata that make up a life. Her stories are burial mounds, full of detailed memories of place and period, of food, clothes, popular songs, artefacts and kitchen decor, which the middle-aged man or woman unpacks and broods over.

"It was the early Sixties; the precise year had to do with bubble-cut hairdos, with white lipstick, with dark rings pencilled round the eyes", recalls the mature woman who was once the naive student, infatuated with the married archaeology professor in "The Bog Man". Atwood's characters have total recall of physical detail,



Margaret Atwood, princess of our recovery of times past, with her new collection of tales of dead relationships that are universal

up to 30 years later. In "Isis in Darkness" a paunchy, unsuccessful academic works on the poetry of the young woman with long dark hair and black-outlined eyes who thrilled him reading her work in coffee-bars when they were young. He knows she is now thick-bodied, dowdy, smelling of cats and cheap wine, but he digs obsessively for the magic she once had for him. The ageing, left-wing woman journalist in "Hack Wednesday" is "squirreling away bits of time" — photos, letters, baby-clothes, a piece of the Berlin Wall — as her personal and political universe crumbles and rearranges itself, "and time goes on".

These are sad stories, concerned with the superannuation of ideas, or love, or fame, or talent.

WILDERNESS TIPS And Other Stories By Margaret Atwood Bloomsbury, £14.99

Betrayal, disappointment, disillusion, loss, seem inevitable. Reconstructing love and life from the shards of memory doesn't seem to help anyone. Lois in "Death by Landscape" (one of the summer camp, canoe-trip stories) "can remember everything, every detail, but it does her no good". The past remains a museum, and one's former self a museum-piece. The woman in "The Bog Man" makes her old love affair into a funny story for her friends, but her story is "like an artefact from a

vanished civilisation" because the social climate which made it possible has vanished. Similarly in "True Trash", which reconstructs memories of a traumatic sexual initiation at a summer camp: "It's an archaic story, a folk-tale, a mosaic artefact. It's a story that would never happen now."

All pretty depressing, and infertile. Yet Atwood can be wonderfully funny, about the wife of a successful, unfaithful man in "Weight", for example, "over-tanned, overexercised, with alert leathery eyes and too many tendons in her neck. I see these wives, packs of them, or pairs or teams, loping around in their tennis whites, over at the club. Smug, but jump". She is sharp about Englishmen — the cultivated,

charming ones who "will flirt with dogs if there is nothing else handy", because they must get a response to their charm; or the whingeing ones: "It was a traditional compliment to be whinged at by an Englishman. It was his way of saying he trusted you, he was conferring upon you the privilege of getting to know the real him. The inner, whingeing him. That was how they thought of women, secretly: whinge receptacles."

She may, to borrow her imagery, have dug her own grave so far as these short stories are concerned, but there's an awful lot of wicked life, like ferrets in a sack, jumping about in her writing. If she could only let the undead bury their dead.

Dirty work fills Victorian Bath

STEPHEN Collingwood is a soul in torment. As curate in charge of the Chapel of St Catherine, he is responsible for the spiritual welfare of Haul Down, an unsalubrious area of the city. A well-connected widower, he could have had his pick of the smarter inner city livings. But Stephen has a taste for the hair shirt. It aggravates his painfully crooked faith, and inflames his feelings for Charlotte Moore.

All are lost causes — Stephen, his faith, and his passion for the lovely Mrs Moore — for this is late Victorian England. Mrs Moore

Adrian Healey — outwardly jaunty, inwardly prone to self-loathing — who reminisces at length about youthful sodomy (first at public school then, more profitably, as a Piccadilly rent boy) yet is not averse to more conventional heterosexual comings and goings. Being a Cambridge man, Healey sports a cloak and dagger and is no stranger to literary fraud. Mr Fry reveals in his own cleverness, and writes with such panache that it's difficult to avoid being swept up in the fun. At one stroke, he seems to have relieved himself of the school

John Nicholson

THE SUMMER OF THE
ROYAL VISIT
By Isabel Colegate
Hamish Hamilton, £14.99

THE LIAR

By Stephen Fry
Heinemann, £13.99

PLAYING AROUND
By Richard Neville
Hutchinson, £14.99

DANGEROUS GAMES
Susan Crossland
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £13.99

novel, the university novel and the literary thriller. It'll be interesting to see where he goes next in this genre, if anywhere. (Less whimsical than his pal Douglas Adams, Stephen Fry is unlikely to make the bestseller list. He will, however, make some people very happy indeed, not just by virtue of zest and charm, but because he takes a craftsman's pride in assembling his sentences.)

Fun of a different kind from an iconoclast of yesteryear (remember the "Schoolkids Oz" trial), Richard Neville, once resident counter-cultural attaché in London, now safely reported in domestic bliss in his native Australia, with nothing better to do than try to create a bestseller out of what happens to ex-iconoclasts who sell out. Some good one-liners and gibes directed with careful even-handedness at TV moguls and the sillier excesses of post hippydom. But I'm afraid it's all very predictable, and I can't see *Playing Around* happening for the nice Mr Neville.

It will, for the nice Mrs Crossland, though. Susan Crossland's late-ish run on the open side for the title of thinking reader's Jackie Collins will be significantly advanced by her second novel. Set largely in Washington and London against a background of power politics and weekly journalism, *Dangerous Games* fairly cracks along. Politicians posture, lobbyists lobby, editors fornicate. IRA bombers bomb — even the Dobermann Pinschers do what Dobermann Pinschers do (not for the squeamish, this scene). Like much successful popular fiction, this is a highly moral tale. It's consistently entertaining, however, and more than adequately written.

From the sublime to the — well, let's settle for outrageous. Stephen Fry is a man of many parts. *The Liar*, his first novel, confirms Mr Fry's literary potential, and will do nothing to diminish public curiosity in the contrast aroused by reports of excessive priapism in the past, and his currently avowed preference for celibacy.

The anti-hero of *The Liar* is

blowing his sentences.) Fun of a different kind from an iconoclast of yesteryear (remember the "Schoolkids Oz" trial), Richard Neville, once resident counter-cultural attaché in London, now safely reported in domestic bliss in his native Australia, with nothing better to do than try to create a bestseller out of what happens to ex-iconoclasts who sell out. Some good one-liners and gibes directed with careful even-handedness at TV moguls and the sillier excesses of post hippydom. But I'm afraid it's all very predictable, and I can't see *Playing Around* happening for the nice Mr Neville.

Pursuit of happiness in files and life

WHAT is happiness? That is the question, though you would never guess it at first. Michael Frayn's wonderful new novel threatens for six chapters to be just a well-written spy story.

Jessel, a paper-pusher in the Cabinet Office, is given a death to investigate. A colleague was found on the pavement under a Ministry of Defence window 16 years earlier. Belatedly "the television is showing an interest, threatening to reveal that he was working on some secret defence project. Jessel takes the case with reluctance. He

knew Summerchild in another life, that of his childhood. The memories are few but indelible. In the lane where the young Jessel stood with Summerchild's daughter, Summerchild appeared out of darkness, his hair "like an angel's aureole against the street lamp". When he spoke the words seemed to have been dragged up one by one from the depths. He seemed dull but troubled. Jessel's own state, then and now. This, it seems, is a spy novel in which self-exploration goes hand in hand with professional fretting. The simultaneous probing

Frances Hill

A LANDING ON
THE SUN
By Michael Frayn
Viking, £14.99

into Summerchild's secret activities and Jessel's memories and present, sad life become compelling, for him and the reader. Jessel discovers Summerchild was working for a mysterious branch of government called the Strategy Unit, set up by Harold Wilson. But the first clue to its nature reveals that both the unit and the novel are quite different from what we expected.

The whole is even more bizarre than the parts, but

makes lunatic sense. Within this dazzling intellectual framework lies an exploration of the obscure emotion that is the book's central theme. Frayn attempts definitions. "Happiness is an aspect of the thoughts you're thinking" and "happiness is being where one is and not wanting to be anywhere else." His two main characters do not just discuss the condition, they achieve it. The reader, though, does not witness this, but learns it indirectly. Summerchild and others are presences heard but not seen. In this novel, as in *The Trick of It*, Frayn's last, the narrator is on stage alone.

Jessel deduces, rather than finds out with certainty, that they achieve happiness at the price of misery to others. Intermittent anguish to them-

selves and, finally, death. The technique is fascinating. But the drawback is that the characters never come fully alive. Frayn suggests that happiness is a fleeting condition never experienced in isolation from its opposite, but by contrast to it and mixed with it. The question has to be asked whether, without making the reader care about the characters' feelings, the novelist can stir those of his readers so as to give new understanding of old truths rediscovered. In *The Trick of It* Frayn implicitly asked this question himself.

Never mind. He has delivered an elegantly written and constructed, witty, intriguing, thought-provoking read. There have been few new novels as enjoyable or interesting.

Swardback shafts novel trendy the

FRONT to back novel irritating deeply and flawed but clever a is this. Reels mind the till backward running, review the is so. Very-arsy runs *Arrow Time's*, positions different between flight its in stationary arrow the of paradox Xeno's like. So it starts with a man's death in an American hospital, with something like the man's soul, which never quite became attached to him in his lifetime, acting as the perplexed and disgusted narrator, as their (dis)joint past life unfolds.

Of course, it is impossible, as we have already just seen, to keep up the back-to-front trick literally, without becoming impenetrable or irritating, or both. To start with the man cries "shub". But quite soon it is just the exchange of sentences and exclamations in conversations, not the words and syllables that are reversed — stichomythia in the fast backward mode, full of dramatic irony for the past/future. The man is called Tod T. Friendly at the time of his death, me to symbolic heavily sounds which. And he seems to be in a pretty good mess, apart from being dead: a doctor, promiscuous, impotent, and haunted by some black secret to do with children and women. The way that

everything happens chronologically back to front gives Amis Martin opportunities for bad taste scatological jokes with the acts of defecation, vomiting, love, and, in due course, abortion. Not all of these acts are equally funny, jokes to accessible or. Meeting new characters at the crumby end of their relationships with Tod gives an element of detective story, as you try to imagine what can have brought them to this miserable conclusion.

Force de tour is it, a tricky novel for the literary and crosswording classes. Bed in read to bottom the in pain a but. The trouble is that the ingenious form is incongruously matched with its matter, which is tragic as Tod's life unwinds backwards to his youth in the war. Some scenes are so terrible that it is almost blasphemous, and certainly uncomfortable, to run the film of them backwards. Amis Martin, shot fascinating a. "Round way right the it have we can time next but

Philip Howard

TIME'S ARROW
By Martin Amis
Jonathan Cape, £13.99

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TELEVISION

Knocks without much punch

THERE is a famous pilgrimage in Ireland that involves the almighty self-mortification of climbing a mountain on one's knees. Watching last night's play, *Journey to Knock* (BBC 2), in which three disabled Englishmen travelled by Catholic nursing-home mini-bus to an Irish shrine — overcoming lots of mishaps with wheelchairs along the way — one could not help feeling that an urge towards penance was perhaps one's reason for staying tuned. "Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned." "That's all right. Say three Hail Marys and watch *Journey to Knock*."

Written by former *Coronation Street* star William Ivory, this play was strangely un-moving, but it is hard to say exactly why. Perhaps it was just fashionably "unsentimental" — which covers (as they say) a multitude of sins. The frustrations and indignities experienced by young Terry (David Thewlis) were certainly pitiable. But somehow his embittered "Why me?" complaints, though passionate, were never allowed to pack a proper punch.

The context for his sufferings was not so much disability as Catholicism — which was a shame, because Ivory



Professing advice John Hurt had dramatised Terry's disability, but left his spiritual dilemma to look after himself (it didn't). Struck down by a fatal motor neurone disease, Terry claimed repeatedly that he drew no solace from religion. (Unfortunately, this never seemed really important, especially since his rantings were defused continually by the reactions of his two Wise Old Bird companions (played by John Hurt and Charles Simon).)

The spiritual dimension of *Journey to Knock* was always its weakest point. But, to be fair, the play possessed few strengths anyway. With the exception of David Thewlis's fine performance, there was almost nothing to get a handle on. The motivations of the John Hurt character, Alfred, were a total mystery; events and conversations seemed arbitrary; the neglect of Terry's spiritual needs was absurd; and the waywardness of wheelchairs ("Whoops, there it goes") was a dramatic device milked once too often.

Radio Times, however, explained away all these difficulties with blinding simplicity. *Journey to Knock* was not only "unsentimental" but a comedy, too. Lumme. One casts one's mind back, and dredges, frantically, for laughs. Call me a pompous old sober-side, but perhaps I need to be given more obvious permission to laugh when disability is at stake. A few jokes, for example, might have done the trick.

LYNNE TRUSS

CINEMA: NEW RELEASES

Tapping wit and warmth by turns

Geoff Brown reviews Liza Minnelli in *Stepping Out*, Mel Brooks's fumbling *Life Stinks*, plus *Trust*, *FX2*, *Teen Agent* and *Get Back*

W hoever thought Liza Minnelli would play a character called Mavis? Yet here she is, the gamine firecracker of stage and screen, cast as Mavis Turner — somebody picking up the pieces after a failed Broadway career by teaching amateurs tap-dancing in a Buffalo church hall. "I even auditioned for Bob Fosse once," this star of *Cabaret* tells an awestruck pupil. "I didn't get the job, but" — the voice assuming the bended knee position — "I did get to touch his sleeve."

"Come off it, Liza!" you feel like yelling. Yet for all the distortions caused by star casting and an American setting, Lewis Gilbert's *Stepping Out* (PG, Cannon Baker Street, Fulham Road, Empire) retains much of the simple warmth of Richard Harris's play. Liza gets her moments in the spotlight — a high-kicking dance routine, an impassioned belt through Kander and Ebb's title song, yet she sinks herself sufficiently into Mavis Turner to make the story viable.

Originally, these would-be hoofers — seven women, one trembling man — learned their steps for a charity show arranged by a woman from New York. Now their goal is a far ritzier affair, organised by a silver-tongued bitch at the Centre for the Performing Arts. In adapting his play for the screen, Harris stretches the action beyond the church hall set, but the kernel remains the rehearsals and Mavis's struggle to mould her misfits into Fred and Ginger.

Steps, twirls and pratfalls leave Harris's little room for strong characterisations, so the performers must convince by their own efforts. As the taciturn, prissy Vera, Julie Walters sits much laughter, though the American setting leaves her peers-and-winners Brit socially mis-named. Sheila McCarthy (from *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*) brings the shy, gangling Andy quivering to life; Shelley Winters has her moments as the sassy pianist ("Hats and canes? You're asking for trouble").

The veteran director, Gilbert, displays the same common touch and sympathy for women that his earlier *Education for a Girl* and *Shirley Valentine* does. He does nothing to make Harris's plot surprising; nobody could. But *Stepping Out* was never meant to trip up the audience; by tried and true means, it aims to amuse and warm the heart's cockles.

Mine were warmed to a turn. For those with astringent tastes, Hal Hartley's *Trust* (15, Metro, Everyman) is the answer to a prayer. Almost every character teeters on the brink of psychosis. Pregnant small-town teenage brat Maria starts with a slap; Matthew, a computer engineer with a very short fuse, cossets a hand grenade lest he becomes overwhelmed by his abusive father or the world at large. Streets are stocked with lecherous storekeepers, and baby kidnappers. Nothing is safe, not even a glass of milk: the camera watches as one

'Steps, twirls and pratfalls leave Harris little room for strong characterisations'

shudders off a vibrating washing machine and smashes to the floor. Another director might create a monument to despair from such material. Not Hal Hartley: this bright new talent from the American independent sector deals in delicious deadpan comedy. His first feature, *The Unbelievable Truth*, set forth his style and his penchant for ripping the veils from small-town America. *Trust*, its successor, hones images and dialogue to new sharpness and provides extra dramatic punch.

"I feel like tearing somebody's head off," Martin Donovan's Matt threatens brusquely. Brusqueness is all in word and deed, yet Hartley's characters still build into something approaching recognisable people. Adrienne Shelly — bookworm heroine of *The Unbelievable Truth* — makes a particularly good job of Maria: a horrid girl at the start, but slowly improving as she attempts normal domestic relationships. Hartley's mixture of explosive, bizarre, pathetic and hilarious may not suit all tastes, but with your mind set at the appropriate angle, an epicure's feast is guaranteed.

Mel Brooks: Mel who? The sad fact is that the march of screen humour has left the creator of *Blazing Saddles* twiddling his

thumbs. For vulgar buffoonery, audiences now flock to Brooks's imitators, to the Zucker-Abraham combo and *The Naked Gun*. At least *Life Stinks* (12, Odeon Haymarket), Brooks's first feature since the 1987 *Spaceballs*, recognises the fact, as it takes the star-director into new terrain: the homeless, the derelict, the chasm between rich and poor.

At first Brooks parades his usual persona, playing a callous developer, happily levelling nursing homes. Then he accepts a rival's bet that he cannot survive in downtown Los Angeles without money, credit cards or any mark of status; even his toupee is removed. The scene shifts to the city's meanest streets, rife with crime, crime, cardboard shelters and half-crazed bums — a depressing environment that crows the mighty developer and almost swamps the thin, episodic script.

In the past, Chaplin and the Preston Sturges of *Sullivan's Travels* managed to wrest both sentiment and slapstick from society's ills. Brooks seems inhibited: afraid both of calling on the viewers' emotions or plunging headlong into plain bad taste. *Life Stinks* only finds its feet when attempted realism is ditched for old vaudeville schtick, for cross-talk, facial slaps and wild exaggeration. Elsewhere, the film fumbles: hesitant tears here, mild slapstick there, with an MGM musical parody thrown in. Brooks's screen partner for much of the footage is Lesley Ann Warren (a man-hating bag-lady), were there Oscars for sticking, she would win hands down.

Meanwhile, Hollywood's sequel machine grinds on. *FX*, a 1986 thriller, the current subject for treatment (15, The Deadly Art of Illusion, 15, Cannon Haymarket, Tottenham Court Road; Odeon High Street Kensington) proves as overloaded as its title. Bryan Brown returns as the special-effects wizard, using his skills in the fight against crime, though the crowded script gives him much competition. There is Bluey the clown and other remote-controlled gadgets; there is a thug who refuses to stay dead; above all, there is Brian Dennehy, an actor with a twice Brown's charisma. As it twists and turns through red herrings, loose ends and pumped-up set pieces, *FX2* provides a moderate way of wasting



Staking herself well into the role: Liza Minnelli as Mavis Turner

time. On balance, though, I'd rather play patience.

Every month, some television face that won America's heart gets launched on the big screen. September's contestant is Richard Grieco, from *21 Jump Street* and *Booker*: triangular chin, quizzical eyebrows, swarthy Italian colouring. In America, Teen Agent (PG, Cannon Haymarket, Oxford Street; Whiteleys) is called *If Looks Could Kill*, and if Grieco's fail to, little else about the film will. It begins as an amiable spy spoof. Grieco plays a high-school student mistaken for a CIA operative during a class trip to France. But pleasing business with 007 gadgets gives way to mundane

action and special effects. Roger Rees is the chief villain; Linda Hunt looks uncomfortable as his sidekick, William Dear directed.

Finally, *Get Back* (PG, Cannon Pantom Street), a docile record of Paul McCartney's 1969-70 world tour, which never moves backstage nor gives any indication of whether the seraphic one is performing in Dar es Salaam or Milton Keynes. For visual contrast, the director Richard Lester, an old Beatles hand, makes facile dips into archive footage and his own film, *Help!*. The music, of course, is richly nostalgic, yet compared to *In Bed With Madonna*, the film crawls through the projector like a tortoise.

Titular change

THE British-made film *The Pope Must Die* has undergone a title change in the United States. To avoid giving offence to religious groups it is now *The Pope Must Die*. The new title was suggested by the film's star Robbie Coltrane, who had noticed that the extra 'I' had frequently been added as graffiti on posters in this country — evidently as a comment on his own chubbiness.

Tootling on

OCTOBER 26 is the date set for Ronnie Scott's great expansion. After 32 years in Frith Street, Soho, he is set to open a second jazz club — in Birmingham. The club, in Broad Street, will be inaugurated with a bill headed by the Rolling Stones' drummer, Charlie Watts, and his quintet, leading a Charlie Parker tribute. Attractions later in the season include Marion Montgomery and George Fane.

Win for Weir

A BRITISH television film has taken top honours at "Opera Screen" — the first International Festival of Film and Television Operas, in Helsinki. *Heaven Ablaze in His Breast*, by the Scottish composer Judith Weir, was directed for Danceline Productions by Peter Mumford, and was first screened on BBC 2 last May. It won the festival's first prize of \$22,500 (£13,000), beating 200 other entries from around the world.

Last chance...

IN THE Kander & Ebb musical *70, Girls, 70*, ancient vaudeville performers turn to crime for reasons too feeble to mention. The show is a hotch-potch of chances taken and missed, and the songs are less than so-so, but the vitality of the old troupers is cheering and Dora Bryan lacks about as irrepressibly as ever. At the Vaudeville (071-836 9987) until Saturday.

OPERA

Round the Ring and back

Hilary Finch meets British bass John Tomlinson, who takes four roles in Covent Garden's latest *Ring* cycle



Tomlinson: "Wotan is now an extension of myself"

Productions of the *Ring* have a way of growing slowly. So slowly, in fact, that long-term casting decisions sometimes seem to be working on entirely different timescales. Exceptionally clear, far-sighted vision is essential for any management planning the four mighty chapters of Wagner's epic, and this time round, Covent Garden seems to have been wearing bifocals.

In the unfolding instalments of the Götz Friedrich *Ring* which the Royal Opera hastily borrowed from Berlin when their own Lyubimov experiment foundered in 1989, British bass John Tomlinson has been cast as the two dark schemers, Hunding and Hagen. But even as he was plotting vengeance and acting as agent of the curse which dogs Wotan, Tomlinson was reigning as the great god himself in Bayreuth. His outstanding success in the last four years as Wolfgang Wagner's chosen Wotan has at last cowed Covent Garden into slotting him in for a single Wotan on Saturday, sharing the role with the American bass, James Morris.

Tomlinson himself is generous enough to give Covent Garden the benefit of the doubt. "My Wotan really did come as a surprise to most people. They'd always thought of me as a true bass, but it turned out that the top of my voice was good enough for Wotan." Something of an understatement for a singer who is one of the most sought-after Wotans in Europe.

Tomlinson's profound understanding of the character is likely to gain one more dimension from working with Götz Friedrich. Harry Kupfer's Bayreuth Wotan startled audiences by its bold humanity. More a flawed hero than a god, this Wotan showed a rare complexity of motivation.

"In Friedrich's understanding, Wotan is altogether less extreme, more a creature of reason," says Tomlinson. "It's

the conscious intelligence which counts. Friedrich is very demanding on what goes on in the character's mind, always finding new angles, new subtleties of interpretation. Somehow, though, I still feel the same person, whatever the environment. Wotan is now an extension of myself."

Tomlinson sees the complexity of motivation in the character as being at its most intense in *Siegfried*, in which he appears on October 14. "Wotan is desperate for Siegfried to get the Ring and save the world, while being aware that this embraces his own destruction. At this point, Wotan is truly heroic."

Tomlinson will go ahead with his Hunding and his Hagen as planned. Will it then be farewell to these roles? "Well, for a bit! I slightly begrudge the vocal 'blackness' of Hagen, but still enjoy the role immensely. Hagen's like a cruise missile, programmed to steal the Ring, come what may. Just like one of those James Bond enemy people."

John Tomlinson appears at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (071-240 1200) as Wotan in *Das Rheingold* on Saturday, as Hunding in *Die Walküre* on Monday and October 11, as the Wanderer in *Siegfried* on October 14, and as Hagen in *Götterdämmerung* on October 8 and 17.

ARTS REVIEWS
Opera, theatre and dance
Page 20

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WOOLWORTHS

Hamlet

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MERMAID THEATRE

Ivor Crewe believes that for the first time a general election may be decided on how the voters view the main party leaders

How much do leaders matter?

Conventional psephological wisdom is that the British vote for the party, not the leader. The elections of 1945, 1970 and 1979 are all instances of a government being defeated even though its leader (Churchill, Wilson and Callaghan respectively) was more popular than that of the Opposition's (Atlee, Heath and Thatcher). Surveys show that those voters who prefer the policies of one party but the leader of the other plump for the policies by six to one. The personal qualities of a party leader only contribute plus or minus two per cent to a party's vote.

This conventional wisdom may soon have to be revised. The next election campaign will be the first to be dominated by television and fought by three centrist parties. On the one hand, television will

unrelentingly portray each party's campaign in terms of what its leader does: his early morning press conference, his mid-morning factory tour, his afternoon walkabout, his evening speech. To this can be added the set-piece big television interviews and perhaps, for the first time, a live debate between the leaders.

On the other hand, the campaign is likely to turn upon the leaders' qualities more than before. The ideological gap between the Conservatives and Labour has never been narrower. The campaign will be devoted to questions of performance, not policy, and

claims about performance amount to claims about the qualities of the party leaders. When Mr Kinnock argues that a Labour government would do things better, not differently, he is making a claim about his team's competence, and above all, his own. At the next election, uncommitted voters will have to judge the parties in terms of their leaders.

The parties are likely to enter the election with one of the biggest popularity gaps between their leaders since regular poll measurements began in the early 1960s. Last month, John Major's "approval rating" was 17 points

ahead of Neil Kinnock's. Comparable figures from three months before other elections show that this gap has been exceeded only once — by Mrs Thatcher's lead over Michael Foot in 1983. Harold Wilson enjoyed a similar lead over Edward Heath in 1966, as did Mrs Thatcher over Mr Kinnock in 1987. On each occasion the government won handsomely.

Between now and the election, this gap is more likely to widen than to narrow, as the Tory tabloids go to work on Mr Kinnock. In his new book, *Media and Voters* (OUP), William Miller shows that in 1987 the right-wing

press had a significant impact on their Labour-supporting readers' views of Mrs Thatcher and Mr Kinnock; an impact that grew as the campaign progressed. Even larger numbers of impressionable, easily-detachable Labour sympathisers read *The Sun* and the *Daily Star* than in 1987.

Both Mr Major's and Mr Kinnock's public stock are well entrenched. In Mr Major's case, the expected pattern of a short honeymoon followed by creeping disillusionment has not been realised. In his first two months as prime minister, his approval rating was 49.50 per cent; in July and

August it was 50.52 per cent. No other prime minister since records began has maintained such a consistently high standing in the first nine months of office. So far, Mr Major seems to have some of Ronald Reagan's Teflon qualities, taking credit for the success in the Gulf, but avoiding blame for unemployment and riots.

In Mr Kinnock's eight years as Opposition leader — the longest period this century that anyone has been Opposition leader without holding office — he has been unable to shake off voters' doubts about his prime ministerial potential. Three months before the 1987

election he trailed 34 to 52 per cent on the approval question; last month he trailed 36 to 54 per cent. Voters appear to have made up their minds about him and it is far from obvious that another Hugh Hudson Kinnock commercial will have the same surprise effect.

The government wants the next election to be seen as a contest between John Major and Neil Kinnock. Having campaigned for the past few years on the question of competence, Labour can hardly resist. The Liberal Democrats will have no objection, so long as the spotlight occasionally falls on the fresh and dynamic Mr Ashdown. So John Major versus Neil Kinnock, with occasional sidetracks at Paddy Ashdown, is what the voters will get.

● The author is professor of government at Essex University

Putting a patent on discovery

Nigel Hawkes says the row over who discovered Aids threatens science

Science, once a quiet backwater occupied by dreamy dons with obsessive interest in obscure subjects, is beginning to seem every bit as cut-throat as big business. Almost every week there are claims of fraud or misadventure, arguments about priority, and challenges to the integrity of research workers.

Once started, such challenges have a tendency, like a soap-opera, to run and run. This week, for example, the seven-year row over who discovered the virus that causes Aids has entered a new phase. An official American investigation has concluded that one of the scientists credited with the discovery was guilty of "creating and fostering" an atmosphere conducive to fraud in his laboratory at the United States National Cancer Institute near Washington.

Robert Gallo, the scientist concerned, has so far made no public comment on the leaked draft of the investigator's report, though his lawyers say that it is inaccurate and only an early draft. After years of denial, Dr Gallo recently admitted that the virus identified by his laboratory had reached him from the Pasteur Institute in Paris, but most people believed that was the result of confusion rather than dishonesty.

The report appears to make rather more serious charges, suggesting that Dr Gallo had erased from his original paper a reference to the fact that an assistant, Mikulas Popovic, had grown a sample of the Pasteur virus. By turning a blind eye to his colleague's actions, Dr Gallo merited "significant censure", the report is believed to say.

The saga of the Aids virus, which has rumbled threateningly ever since Dr Gallo and Dr Luc Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute in Paris first contested primacy back in 1984, looks likely to encompass a few more chapters yet. At stake are not just academic honours, or even Nobel Prizes, but the substantial royalties that are expected to be earned from tests kits that use the original finding.

The fuss over Aids is not, alas, an isolated incident. The more triumphs the biologists celebrate, the more understanding they gain of the innermost workings of the human cell, the higher the potential rewards and the greater the

temptation to cheat. The danger is that the old relationships, the easy to and fro between laboratories which has enabled scientists to share data and specimens freely, will be sacrificed and with it will go much of the impetus behind discovery.

This week, the European parliament has been discussing the question of patenting life forms, a step that the US Patent Office took three years ago when it granted a patent to Harvard University for a mouse which incorporated a gene predisposing it to cancer. If Europe follows the same route, many discoveries by scientists working in biology will acquire the status of inventions. The machinery of the cell will be as patentable as a new engine, or a new kind of microchip, a change that will surely further increase the pressures on scientists.

Already, many biologists working in exciting areas of molecular biology think first of seeking patents, and only second of publishing their work so that others can read and repeat it.

To fail to do so in the tough climate of the 1990s would be foolish — the Medical Research Council has never been forgiven for failing to patent the discovery of monoclonal antibodies by Cesar Milstein at the Molecular Biology Laboratory at Cambridge. For biology it represents a loss of innocence.

More insidious are the pressures to claim results even when they cannot be justified. In America, one of the greatest growth areas in science over the past decade has been the case of the Office of Scientific Integrity (OSI), a department of the National Institutes of Health. During 1990, OSI uncovered six cases of data fabrication, five of plagiarism, and seven of other "deviant" scientific behaviour involving dishonesty of one sort or another. OSI has 70 cases on its books.

Does it matter very much if science succumbs to the same moves that have long governed business? The answer is that it may, if the result is to dry up the free flow of communication that makes science work so well. If nothing can be taken on trust, the very essence of the scientific method might be lost, and that would be a tragedy for all of us.

Satan laughs at Yugoslavia

Bernard Levin on the death throes of a mongrel nation



Praying for peace: the funeral of a Croatian soldier killed at the battle of Tenja in Marijanci

the colours were no less bright, particularly the ones dyed in blood. Then the devil, doubled up with laughter, pointed to the hybrid thing called Yugoslavia.

We don't believe in the devil, do we? But the trouble is that the devil does believe in us, and that is why there is a country made up of half a dozen irreconcilable miniature states with names that seem to be anagrams, all apparently determined to kill the people in some or all of the others.

You can go rabbiting on about nationalism all day and most of the night, and start on the murderous evil of Tito as dawn comes up, but you will know in your heart that it has nothing to do with such recognisable and logical explanations, and if you say that it has you

still have to explain the powerful scent of brimstone that fills the air.

You also have to explain another extraordinary phenomenon: frequently — too frequently to be coincidences — the smaller and more insignificant the territory, the greater and more violent the passion with which it is defended and with which it attacks. Own up: had you ever so much as heard of Nagorno-Karabakh until the Soviet Union fell to pieces (I forbear to ask if you could find it on a map), and now that you have heard of it would you like to be asked who are the people the Nagorno-Karabakhians hate, and why they hate them?

You could turn the tables on your tormentor, of course, by asking the Nagorno-Karabakh fac-

tion themselves why they hate the other lot, and some damned silly answers you would get, but that very fact reinforces the claim that evil cannot be destroyed but can only change its shape, its direction and its employers. Somebody has been reading Shakespeare, but misunderstanding him:

... Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell.

O, but their spirits have been puff'd with divine ambition lately,

these Yugoslavs, and I bet they really did believe it was divine; however, I would rather you draw to their attention, rather than me, the bit about invisible events and what is mortal and unsure, particularly when the invisible events lead to extirpating passers-by who ask for directions in strange accents.

Perhaps the trouble started when we stopped talking about the Balkans: the very word is *ipso facto* ridiculous, but when men with unkempt moustaches started to talk in their own patois about Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Macedonia, Slovenia and God knows what else ending in a, the signs could be seen posted at any crossroads in any of these constituent mini-nations, and not even a colloquy of linguists could persuade themselves that any of the signs read:

... while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds,
Fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain!

And we can still not be sure that a pack of clowns from the European Community, headed by that man from Luxembourg, might send an expeditionary force to separate the Yugoslav factions.

Que l'humanité se débrouille sans moi. These noble and most helpful words have been badly neglected recently, and it is time somebody embroidered them on a banner; if nobody else will, I shall do the job myself. I am not heartless, and I shudder daily at the rising toll of death in Yugoslavia, but there is nothing I can do about it and there is nothing anybody else can do either.

When one door shuts, another opens; when one man drops a gun, another picks it up. Suppose the Luxembourg man, by sheer force of personality, commands the warring Yugoslavs to cease and desist, and suppose they do so. How long, do you suppose it will be, before north Africa or central America or Borneo or Indonesia bursts into flames?

Come: let us be selfish. Let us recognise that there will be no civil war in Britain, and give, for this relief, much thanks. It has been many centuries since the contagion touched us; muffle the bells for those who mourn, but let them sound for our good fortune.

...and moreover CRAIG BROWN

Yesterday it was reported that the chairman of the Headmasters' Conference had expressed fears that the inclusion of *The Day of the Jackal* on the list of A-level set texts would, in years to come, be followed by examinations in the works of Jackie Collins.

Some pupils may be under the illusion that, 20 years from now, a Jackie Collins set text would be easier to understand than, say, *Paradise Lost*. But this is by no means the case, as this leaked trial document makes clear:

English Literature
A-level June 2011

The life and works of
Jackie Collins

You have one hour to answer the following questions. Write your answers on one side of the paper only. You are advised to read each question carefully before embarking on your answers.

Question 1: 'Ma Maison, Friday lunch. Buddy had decided to test out the pale tan Armani Jacket. Beige Slacks and matching collarless silk shirt. The look was right, expensively casual. Buddy felt free to cast an interested eye around the fashionable restaurant. There were a lot of women lunching together. Tables of them. Chic. Stylish. Beautiful. "Jason suddenly felt it his duty to give him a run-down on every famous face in the place. "You see that group of women over there, well the beautiful one with the dark hair is Mrs Johnny Carson — the devastating Joanna. And at

the next table is Louisa Moore — wife of Roger — she's such fun. And the couple in the corner...'

'Stephanie Powers and Robert Wagner. Buddy interrupted. (From *Hollywood Wives* by Jacqueline Collins, 1983)

a) Compare and contrast Stephanie Powers and Robert Wagner. Stephanie Powers was a smart and expensive after-shave worn in the second half of the 20th century, compared to Robert Wagner, who was a brand of deodorant commonly to be found on tables wherever Hollywood stars were gathered.

b) What does the author mean when she speaks of 'Ma Maison'? Ma Maison is Buddy's mother. She has a lot of people round for Friday lunch.

c) In your own words, why had Buddy decided to test out Beige Slacks?

Beige Slacks is an up-and-coming "star" who Buddy is keen to test out against her rival Armani Jacket for the title role in his new film. Beige Slacks and Armani Jacket are generally considered among Jackie Collins's most lifelike creations.

Question 2: 'Karen was tall, with a supple tanned body, thick copper hair and carefully chiselled features. Her connections were the best, she knew everyone and everything — since, her father was George Lancaster, a giant superstar.'

a) In your own words, describe Karen, paying particular atten-

tion to Collins's rich use of imagery and symbolism. Collins makes it clear through vivid use of language that Karen is not a human being but a computer constructed by expert engineers. ('Her connections were the best'). Her 'hair', the author tells us, is constructed from 'thick copper', in all likelihood so as to act as a conductor in the event of lightning. Elsewhere on the body of the computer, the 'features' are described as 'carefully chiselled', probably by the skilled giant George Lancaster. The Karen Robot is obviously an integral part of directory inquiries, knowing 'everyone and everything'.

Question 3: (IMPORTANT: for Advanced Collins Studies Course students only.) 'When Maralee refused to loan Elaine ten thousand dollars it was just as well because Little S Shitz failed to turn up for their second meeting which was okay because Angel would never file for divorce anyway.'

a) Why did Maralee refuse Elaine?

b) Why was it 'just as well' that Little S Shitz failed to turn up?

c) Who on earth are all these people anyway?

Question 4: 'Hollywood Wives' is one of the most difficult texts on the English Literature course. I am bound to fail. I now realise I would have been happier taking the easy option of Beowulf. Discuss.

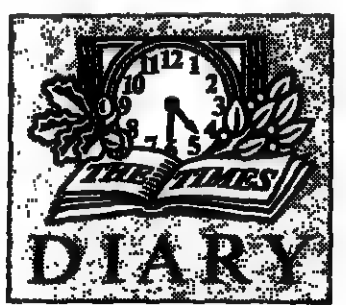
Red sales as the sun sets

WHEN empires fall, auction houses move in. The London dealers Phillips are busy gathering communist memorabilia in the wake of the Soviet coup, as Russians, desperate to rid themselves of their stalinist past, sell off their heritage for a song. The first sale takes place in November and features Soviet flags and other items.

'Collectors have already shown great interest in flags, medals, uniforms, busts of Lenin and Stalin,' says Adam Livingstone, of Phillips's arms and armour department. 'Like any material from a previous empire, it's of great historical interest to collectors, who are attracted to the major moments in history which leave their evidence by the way-side.'

Phillips have already obtained a banner embroidered with effigies of Lenin and Stalin, priced £250-£350, from a client who was in Moscow during the coup. 'We are very interested in any other material from the Soviet regime, particularly the revolution and the 1920s and 1930s,' says Livingstone. 'In five to ten years time, this will be a very big collectors' field.'

Also in the Phillips warehouse is a head of Stalin, produced in 1947 by the state porcelain factory in what was Leningrad with an estimated value of £2,000-£3,000. Much of the Soviet memorabilia seems to be filtering through thanks to westerners and foreign correspondents returning with for next to nothing in Moscow. Peter Millar, a writer on Soviet affairs, recently returned from Moscow with a red satin proletarian flag fringed with gold. 'I found it in the Izmailovo market in



Moscow," he says. "I'd hate to tell you what it cost, it was so cheap. But it was a month's salary for a Russian."

● During a recent meeting of an EC agriculture committee, a French speaker called for the Community to show 'la sagesse des Normands'. The simultaneous translation provided for the English members of the committee had the French calling for Norman Wisdom to help sort out the EC's problems. Who said the EC was little more than an elaborate pantomime?

Celebrated date

TO mark today's palindromic date — 19.9.1991 — what is believed to be the English language's longest palindromic narrative poem is being set to music by a group of palindromic musicians. The poem is by Roy Dean, who also holds the record for the fastest completion of the *The Times* crossword. Each of its 72 lines is a self-contained palindromic and the first couplet reads:

Sleepless evening, nine. Vessel peels,
Sleek cats yell at alley, stack eels

'It's about an old man drinking and reminiscing in a sleazy dockside cafe,' says Dean. His verse is being put to music by a group of

musicians and composers known as Panama (after the famous palindromic: 'A man, a plan, a canal — Panama').

Dean approached the group after they appeared at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. 'When they play their music backwards you get marvellous cadences you don't normally hear,' he says. Alas, their joint work is not quite ready: a premiere is planned instead for November when there is another palindromic — albeit contrived by omitting the century — of 19.11.91.



High table

DR Brian Mawhinney, the Northern Ireland minister of state, missed his lunch yesterday because the lift was out of action. Before readers wonder why he was too idle to use the stairs, it should be pointed out that the minister does have his leg in plaster following a cricketering accident.

Mawhinney was at the Stormont hotel in Belfast for an important contract signing when he found the lift not working, due to that ubiquitous catch-all 'refurbishment'. As a result, he sat out lunch in his ministerial car, catching up on his red boxes. However, the minister was eventually forced to hobble up stairs for the first-floor signing ceremony.

Mawhinney damaged his Achilles tendon way back in July playing for a team captained by Peter Brooke, the Northern Ireland secretary, against the civil service. But it is good to know that even government ministers do not receive special treatment on these occasions. The minister applied to his local council in Peterborough for one of those much sought-after orange disabled motorist discs which allow cars to park on yellow lines with impunity. The council told him that as his injury was not 'permanent or substantial' he failed to qualify under the government's own stringent criteria.

● The Liberal Democrats believe Paddy Ashdown is cuddly and have launched Paddybear as a £19.95 Christmas stocking filler. The bear is supposed to raise money for the election campaign. 'You can buy a mummy bear for £12.95 to go with it,' says a Lib Dem spokesman. How does the party difference in the price tag?

Balkan delights

WITH an inimitable sense of timing, Yugotours has just produced its winter holiday brochure. 'Yugoslav nightlife is great fun and reasonably priced,' it declares, which is one way of pointing out that evenings are frequently enlivened by the deafening roar as the Croats and Yugoslavs slug it out.

But for those fainthearted who are not convinced about Yugoslavia this winter, Yugotours has taken out a special insurance policy — 'for those unforeseeable difficulties that may occur in which you may suffer injury or death during your holiday arising from an activity which is not part of the holiday arrangements.'

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سكن من الاحلى



STATE OF THE UNION

The disparity between democracy in Scotland and that in Westminster is so gross as to be indefensible. That the separatist Scottish Nationalist Party, whose conference opened yesterday in Inverness, has failed to capitalise on this is a reflection only of its ineptitude, not on the weakness of the case for greater devolution.

Not surprisingly, many Scots are wondering why, if it is right for the Balkans (or Georgia) to break with Moscow in the name of national democracy and autonomy, Scotland should not enjoy at least some greater independence from London. The two cases are not the same, but the freedom to choose not to be ruled by overlarge, remote and centralised government is an emerging theme of the 1990s. Only 17 per cent of Scots regard the present constitutional deal as satisfactory. Sooner or later, Scotland will demand devolution and get it.

A modest Conservative victory in the next general election would worsen rather than relieve this tension. Current polls suggest further Tory losses in Scotland rather than gains. If the Tories lose the coming by-election at Kincardine and Deeside, the number of Scottish Conservative MPs at Westminster will drop from ten to nine out of a total of 72 Scottish seats. If the Liberal Democrats win it, as they are expected to, their Scottish strength will move the opposite way, from nine to ten. The party governing the United Kingdom would have sunk to being the third largest party in Scotland in terms of Members of Parliament. Labour has 48 Scottish members, and now looks very much like the "natural party of government" north of the border.

Tory leaders are happy just as long as Scotland is governed by them from Westminster, along with England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and are blind to the damage to democratic principles. They take false comfort from the incompetence of the SNP, first in dallying so long with chauvinist

socialism, then in being out-manoeuvred on constitutional reform by Labour and the Liberal Democrats, who caught the popular mood with last autumn's Scottish Constitutional Convention. Both those parties contributed to that forum, while the SNP and the Conservatives stood aloof.

From the convention emerged a proposal for a national Scottish assembly, which both the parties taking part have adopted. This would give the Scots a fair measure of self-government, but they would still be within the union and still ultimately subject to Westminster (where their present over-representation must end). The Scots may react cautiously to the extreme demands of the SNP — such as independence by 1993 which the party called for yesterday — but this does not mean they like the status quo. Even most Tory voters want it changed. And although the constitution is not quite top of the Scottish political agenda, sensible steps towards greater self-government have proved attractive to voters. Thus the SNP may bang the nationalist drum, but it is Labour and the Liberal Democrats which benefit.

Some of the attraction to Scottish voters of Labour's constitutional moderation, however, may depend on anticipation of a Labour victory in the general election. A victory for John Major would dash such hopes and be good news for a more radical separatism, suggesting to many Scots that there is no respite from "alien" Tory rule short of leaving the union.

The best way for them to neutralise these sentiments is for the Conservatives to take the maintenance of the union more seriously and impose on the Scots the duties as well as the delights of devolution — even if (perhaps especially if) that means Labour rule from Edinburgh. Separatism is not central to the Scottish political tradition. But its appeal will strengthen the longer its opposite, "democratic centralism", is treated as the essence of United Kingdom government.

HARD MAN OF GEORGIA

Nationalism is a powerful and complex political motivation. It was the key to the breakup of the Soviet empire and is proving the key to the emerging politics of its component states. Nowhere is this more true than in the Caucasian republic of Georgia. Having elected a nationalist intellectual and dissident, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, as their president, most Georgians were delighted when he declared independence in April and no less so when he defeated the Soviet coup. Now Georgians are being asked to support his harsh measures against opposition leaders, demonstrators and the press. They may be less delighted, but they may have no choice.

Ever since their kingdom was annexed by Russia in 1801, the Georgians have waited to recapture independence. Does their liberator now mean to make himself their dictator? If he does, the hopes of two centuries hang in the balance. Georgia under the tsars was obliged to eke out an existence on the southern extremity of a vast empire. Despite acquiring the status of a Union republic under Stalin, the yoke on Georgia grew heavier throughout the rule of this their most notorious son.

More recently a second Georgian, Eduard Shevardnadze, achieved eminence on the Soviet stage. As Georgian party chief under Brezhnev, he stifled dissent. As foreign minister under Mikhail Gorbachev, he was more liberal but did little for his homeland. Only when protest erupted in 1989, with the slaughter of a score of demonstrators in Tbilisi, did Mr Shevardnadze return. But he was too late to quash the nationalist upsurge that carried Mr Gamsakhurdia's Free Georgia movement to power a year ago.

Zviad Gamsakhurdia grew up in a pious culture of suppressed nationalism, in which secret hopes were fostered by memories of past glory. His father was a man of letters. Zviad, though steeped in patriotic literature, learned and then taught English. The KGB first came for him when he was 17. For years

he resisted them, but when under arrest in 1977 for monitoring human rights during Mr Shevardnadze's administration, Zviad Gamsakhurdia cracked. He obtained a more lenient prison sentence at the price of a public retraction and ritual confession.

As president, he has tried to compensate for this blot upon his nationalist credentials by giving rivals of access to the media. Mr Gamsakhurdia's autocratic style had alienated foreign opinion even before the police shooting of demonstrators in Tbilisi a fortnight ago. His harsh treatment of the Ossetian minority in the north has encouraged pressure for its secession. He hates Mr Shevardnadze, of whose ambitions he remains suspicious, and he understandably hesitated to join in a new "union of sovereign republics".

Mr Gamsakhurdia is not yet a dictator. His arrest of senior opposition figures this week may have been a pious response to the breakdown of order in the capital. Parliament is due to meet today. Besides debating economic reforms, it is due to set a date for parliamentary elections. Though Georgy Chanturia, one of the president's leading opponents, is now in detention, his demands for faster privatisation, land reform and freedom of the press would mostly be met if the proposals now before parliament become law. After 190 years of colonial rule, this is a sort of progress.

Georgia has never enjoyed democracy before, and compared to the Baltic states or even Russia it has had little exposure to Western influence. Mr Gamsakhurdia remains a product of the Soviet Union and like many former dissidents may find it hard to shake off the intolerance in which he was schooled, to adopt a pluralism of which he has no experience. He is a cosmopolitan yet also a nationalist, like many emerging leaders all over post-communist Europe. Their politics may not always be to Western tastes, but the West will have to live with them for the time being.

CULLING TO CONSERVE

The news that Zimbabwe is starting to cull thousands of elephants has made complex a slogan that has, until recently, seemed blithely simple: save the elephant! Elephants are to be culled to protect them, says Zimbabwe. The cull started on Tuesday in the Sengwa National Park, where 250 elephants were killed. In the end, 10,000 or more elephants may die in Zimbabwe. It has more elephants within its borders than at any time this century and they are destroying its ecology.

Other countries want to reopen the ivory trade, to give peasant farmers some incentive to protect, indeed farm, elephants rather than exterminate them to stop them wrecking crops and trees. The hunting lobby similarly campaigns for the development of big-game shooting as a way of protecting other threatened species, such as the rhinoceros and snow leopard. Without hunting, the grouse, ptarmigan and capercaillie might well have vanished from Britain by now. Nothing helps the survival of a species as much as a stuffed trophy above a hunter's mantelpiece. And nothing so enrages the wildlife lobby.

Recent correspondence in *The Times* about the fate of the bitters has illustrated the differences between absolutists and relativists in conservation. Modern biology has deepened understanding of the "ecological tree", reinforcing the view of relativists that the balance of nature is not a constant but by state now being upset for the first time by modern technology. Species have come and gone since the dawn of time. The mam-

moths of North America, like the moas of New Zealand, made possible the expansion and development of Indian and Maori civilisations long before the latter were overwhelmed by Western colonists. New Zealand exists quite well without the moa.

Yet biology is sending out other more alarming messages. The ecological tree may seem robust, but technological change may have side effects that extend from its branches to its roots. Just as the removal of forests can lead to floods and desertification, so the loss of certain species of bird can lead to insect infestation. Every animal may not have a crucial role in the survival of humans, but animals as a whole do more than enhance our awareness of life itself. They are a constant reminder of where we began and whence a careless disregard of the environment might return us. Hence the alarm with which we should view any extinction. One day it could be ours.

The culling of elephants is therefore not a simple issue. Like the similar debate about whales, it shows that no part of the globe can any longer be regarded as a wilderness. It is rather a vast park, requiring the maintenance of a delicate balance of species and their interests, of economics and ecology. Within this park, many assumptions are having to be abandoned, including the belief clung to by so many that killing animals can never be right. Humans may not need elephants to survive. Elephants unquestionably do need humans. Biological choices are becoming as hard to make as political ones.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Time for church divisions to listen to each other

From the Archbishop of Canterbury
Sir, "When I use a word," said Humpty Dumpty to Alice, "it means just what I choose it to mean." This cavalier use of language seems to be spreading in the Church of England.

The idea that the church is divided into two warring factions labelled "liberal" and "traditional", as suggested by the Archbishop of York in his recent sermon (report, September 9), is a case in point. Where is the "liberal" church? Where are these "liberal" bishops? What are the grounds of his prediction that within five years our liturgies will be addressing God as "she"?

My mind flashed back over my brief experience as Archbishop. In early June the bishops had a residential conference studying and praying about our common mission together. Yes, we are a diverse group of people representing many different views of our faith, but each of us is passionately committed to the proclamation of the gospel and fully convinced that our comprehensive-ness in the Church of England is authentically Christian.

As someone deeply committed to a traditional faith anchored in scripture, the catholic creeds and expressed in the 39 articles, I do not find myself discouraged by the contemporary Church of England.

But there is a deeper issue that bothers me. We are not the kind of church that sends unpopular leaders into Outer Mongolia if they speak unpalatable things. We are, however, the kind of church that expects leaders to act and speak responsibly. It is ironic that the Archbishop's

text included the words "not provoking one another".

The Church of England is not in a state of terminal decline. We are at work with other churches in presenting Christ as Lord. We live that faith in loving service to others. The fierce and passionate commitment many of us have to different expressions of that faith shows not a church in decline but a living church which still has a lot of work to do in establishing that inner unity so essential to such a mission.

So instead of polemics, the dialogue of the deaf, let us start to listen to each other. You never know, we might just hear God speaking through people with whom we disagree.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE CANTUAR,
Lambeth Palace, SE1.

From the Archbishop of York
Sir, Had David Hux at (September 17) read the full text of my sermon in York Minister, they would have realised that my vision of a comprehensive Church of England able to cope with differences mirrors their own.

In my sermon, I was not concerned with the issue of women priests, but I am aware that the process of debate on this — and, in some dioceses, the treatment of opponents — has produced nothing but division and bitterness. Whenever I attend the General Synod or its policy committee, there seems to be yet another contentious issue waiting in the wings, and I do not relish the thought of spending the next ten years embroiled in argument and strife which can only

damage the church's mission, especially in a decade of evangelism.

Indeed many critics of my sermon (though not, I have to say, David Hux) have simply proved that those who do challenge the assumptions of the liberal establishment find that reasoned argument is countered by abuse, by suggestions of personality disorder, and by calls for resignation. This, if it continues, can in the end only produce real schism.

As I said in my sermon, the Church of England is worth saving. But if that can only be achieved by some measure of disunity, by a "church within a church", then better that than the diversion of energy in a decade of bitter conflict and the "progressive alienation" of loyal church folk whose only crime is to hold to the traditional faith and practice of the church.

That this alienation is already happening is evidenced by the hundreds of letters of support which I have received from people who either feel they have been driven out, or else are holding out membership by their finger-tips. I have been astonished by their numbers and moved by their stories.

It is high time that bishops took note of that alienation. And if a "church within a church" is to be avoided — and no one hopes for that more than I do — then the General Synod must give urgent consideration to John Gummer's plea for a ten-year moratorium on further contentious debate.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE AUSTIN,
7 Lang Road,
Bishopthorpe, York.

Restoring fortunes of science funding

From the Astronomer Royal

Sir, I read with pleasure of the government's confidence that the economy is coming out of recession and that economic growth will resume its upward path before the end of the year (report, September 14). The time has come, therefore, to return to the problem of science funding.

The consequences of last year's inadequate Science Budget allocation have been spelled out in detail — the impending closure of the nuclear structure facility at the Science and Engineering Research Council's Daresbury laboratory would have been unthinkable a year ago and still should be today.

Despite the condemnation by many bodies of what has in fact been the continuing underfunding of science over many years, government ministers have persisted in maintaining that there has been an increase in real terms over the last 11 years. Time and again it has been spelled out to them that their statistics are incomplete and misleading; time and again they produce the same reply.

The facts are simple. Government spending on the science base has declined from 0.35 per cent of GDP in 1981 to 0.28 per cent now, and is now lower than that of most of our competitors. This is not the way to build a thriving economy.

With the recent upturn in our economic fortunes a start must surely be made on restoring the fortunes of science, too, and with it the confidence of British scientists. Two years ago the Science Budget was increased in real terms and the outlook then was bright. Can we now look forward to regaining that modestly upward track?

Yours faithfully,
ARNOLD WOLFENDALE,
University of Durham,
Department of Physics,
Science Laboratories,
South Road, Durham,
September 14.

Predicting inflation

From Mr John Nugge

Sir, I have just been offered some life insurance by one of our largest and most reputable insurance companies. The scheme contains the sentence: "To keep pace with inflation your benefits and premiums will automatically increase by 5 per cent annually."

If even our financial companies are conditioned to expect inflation to continue at a regular 5 per cent a year, what hope is there for the government's plans for price stability? Or for monetary union with countries such as Germany, where 5 per cent inflation is a cause for alarm, not for pronouncing inflation as "licked" (report, September 14).

Yours faithfully,
JOHN NUGGE,
22 Haldon Road, SW18,
September 17.

Cathedral restoration

From the Dean of Ely

Sir, Thank you for your spectacular photograph (September 11) which captures the magic of our cathedral's 14th-century Octagon. During 1992 we shall be marking the completion of the Octagon work, but the Dean and Chapter would like to add the footnote that we shall not be marking "the end" of restoration work, as the caption suggests. Ely has undertaken extensive repairs in recent years, but more must follow. The task is never done.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL HIGGINS,
Chapter House,
The College,
Ely, Cambridgeshire,
September 11.

Kinnock and the Labour challenge

From Lord Campbell of Alloway, QC

Sir, Your leader (September 16) heralds a "repackaging" of Mr Kinnock with some commitment to adhere to some specific policies. The government's green paper proposals (*Industrial Relations in the 1990s*, CM 1602) have been on the table for discussion since July. These set a positive course in implementation of two principles:

1. Prevention of organised industrial action — unlawful under extant law — to disrupt public services by confining the consumer an individual right of action.
2. Prevention of aspects of malpractice which include giving notice of industrial action before the result of the ballot is known; misuse of voting papers in ballots for executive elections; and misuse of funds.

The crucial question is not perhaps where Mr Kinnock stands as a matter of commitment, but whether the Labour party could deliver any "repackaging" which retained the substance of the legal reforms introduced by the Thatcher administration.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
CAMPBELL OF ALLOWAY,
2 King's Bench Walk, Temple, ECA.

From Mrs Renée Short

Sir, I worked with Neil Kinnock for 17 years out of my 24 in the House and for some years on the national executive committee of the Labour party. There are not many leaders of any political party who could have carried through successfully changes of policy so badly needed in the Labour party, including ridding it of Militant, from whose disloyal activities many of us suffered. You attack him for changing policies and cultivating "the moderate ground". In any other leader you would call this prudent and praise him for it.

I had my differences with Neil Kinnock from time to time but never failed to recognise his political judgment. If, as you claim, "38 per cent of voters say he puts them off Labour", presumably 62 per cent are not put off. This is not at all a bad record.

Your prescription for a detailed shopping list of desirable policies for Mr Kinnock seems a clear recipe for disaster. In our secretive system of government the opposition is certainly not allowed to see the books and therefore should not enter into

binding detailed obligations for the future.

You say, "It is not Mr Kinnock's fault that the recession appears to be bottoming out". But we are still very much in the worst recession for years; there is a higher level of unemployment and in our towns and cities the signs are clear for all to see: factories are silent, offices are shut down and rows of empty shops are now defined by bill-posters. Mr Major has no remedy. Neil Kinnock has.

Yours faithfully,
RENEE SHORT,
70 Westminster Gardens,
Marshall Street, SW1.

From Mr Sydney Shenton

Sir, Your advice to Mr Kinnock is both sensible and generous. It is to be hoped he and his colleagues will pay attention, for anything that can serve to improve the efficiency of political performance in the country is both welcome and needed.

Despite the excellent showing of the Conservative party under John Major the fact remains that we have suffered since 1979 a continuation of the nation's remorseless relative economic decline. Perhaps you should now also tender equally necessary and sensible advice to the prime minister.

Instead of concentrating so much upon inflation reduction could not equivalent attention be paid to reducing unemployment, so socially and economically damaging? A host of measures could be enacted to assist manufacturing industry, to encourage "Buy British" policies and to abandon the excess of free-market policies no other country even considers.

The time has come for Mr Major to disperse the ideological fog that has enveloped economic policies for so long and for a fully-fledged return to traditional Conservative empiricism.

Sincerely,
SYDNEY SHENTON,
95 The Crescent,
Davenport, Stockport, Cheshire.

From Mr Michael Cloughton

Sir, Mr Kinnock claims to be "a very good, winning captain of his team". But surely his record is played 1 — lost 1.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL CLOUGHTON,
Widom, Maidstone Road,
Ashford, Kent.

Spies apart

From Mr Christopher Whiteside

Sir, The difference between Blake and Gordievsky (Mr Perkins's letter, September 16) is that Blake betrayed a free country while Gordievsky betrayed the KGB.

Now that citizens of what was the USSR are free to express an opinion, I have the impression that many of them do not equate their interests with those of the regime which Blake assisted and Gordievsky renounced.

Yours sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER WHITESIDE,
41 Queens Crescent,
St Albans, Hertfordshire.

Longest reign

From the Reverend M. T. Coombe

Sir, In "No cakes and ale for royal event" (September 13) the Queen is described as the "longest-serving head of state in the Western world". King Baudouin of Belgium ascended his throne in 1951, but admittedly abdicated for a day in April 1990, so does not qualify, but Prince Rainier of Monaco took over in 1949, so must qualify before our Queen.

Yours sincerely,
M. T. COOMBE,
8a Furze Road,
Maidenhead, Berkshire,
September 13.

Disadvantages of two-speed Europe

From the Director of the European Movement

Sir, While the prime minister last week outlined his vision of an enlarged European Community open to the new democracies of central and Eastern Europe (report, September 13), Mr Lamont was giving Britain's support to the Dutch proposals for allowing a two-speed approach to monetary union. Not only does this, once again, suggest there is a dichotomy between "widening" and "deepening" but it fails to take sufficient account of the political consequences that would derive from a two-speed Europe.

It is precisely the Community's determination to move forward collectively on key issues such as its commitment to full economic and monetary union that is the magnet of attraction for the rest of Europe. The formal division of the Community into more and less successful economies would unquestionably be reflected in the political relationships between member states. It would be naive to assume that those in the second tier would command the same authority as the inner circle.

Whereas the need to harmonise key economic indicators, including interest and inflation rates and budget deficits, is essential, a disciplined approach to EMU is considerably more likely to be achieved if a Community deadline is set than if it is left as an objective in competition with the many other priorities facing democratic governments seeking re-election.

For ten years it was easier in Britain to manipulate the economy for electoral purposes than to face up to the discipline of life in the exchange-rate mechanism. British reluctance to accept the principle of early monetary union not only shows up in stark relief our continuing economic failures but again puts off the evil hour when the underlying causes will have to be dealt with.

There may well need to be a compromise between the Deas and the Dutch proposals but if Mr Major is serious about his commitment to Britain being "at the heart of Europe", it is vital that he accepts a clear and binding timetable for the achievement of full monetary union.

Yours faithfully,
PETER LUFF, Director,
The European Movement,
Europe House,
1 Whitehall Place, SW1,
September 16.

New democracies

From Mr Anthony Cavendish

Sir, I read the letter from my friend, Mr E. Donnell (September 16), in an aircraft returning from Eastern Europe, my fifteenth visit in 12 months.

Mr Donnell rightly points out how different are the circumstances of the defeated countries after the war and those of the new "democracies" of central and Eastern Europe, but there is another difference.

The young people in the defeated countries after the war were subdued, tired and deeply affected by the millions of their contemporaries who had lost their lives in the war. Today, the young in the former communist countries are aggressive, impatient and educated by television. They want their cake today and they will not wait.

I do not suggest we should "rush in with an enormous aid package" but the new democracies will not wait 15 years.

Yours truly,
ANTHONY CAVENDISH,
Liford, Devon,
Hardley Wintney, Hampshire,
September 17.

Bail restrictions

From his Honour Peter Mason, QC

Sir, It does not follow, as Stephen Shaw suggests (September 17), that because a defendant is given a non-custodial sentence he should have been granted bail. This widely held fallacy should be exposed. It is the duty of the sentence when selecting the proper sentence to take into account (among other things) the fact that the defendant has already spent time in custody. This fact in fairness may, and often does, tilt the balance in favour of a non-custodial disposal. Such disposal, however, is far from proving that a refusal of bail was justified.

Yours faithfully,
PETER MASON,
Cardiff Crown Court,
The Law Courts,
Cardiff, Cardiff,
September 17.

Buying in space

From Mr S. R. Lancelyn Green

Sir, As most readers will be aware a light year is a measure of distance, not of time (letter, September 17). Should, however, the US government decide the Mir-2 is a vehicle not a property, then if it does not wish to pay \$700 million for unlimited mileage for a fixed period of time it might do well to sign up at this rate per light year. At 8,385 miles per dollar this could be quite a bargain. Incidentally, how do you work out the mileage charge on a geo-stationary orbit?

Yours sincerely,
S. R. LANCELYN GREEN,
Poulton Hall, Poulton Lancelyn,
Befington, Wirral,
September 18.

Chabrier lightly executed

DONALD COOPER



Crowd pleaser: Anthony Ward as King Ouf and Mary Hegarty as the princess

Anthony Ward has designed some fantastic costumes, mainly in red, white and black, and visual gags. Jeremy Sams provides a pointed, singable, and mildly suggestive translation. The whole thing swings along at a tremendous rate and this little-known opera could well provide Opera North with a popular success.

But there is another side to Chabrier. Earlier in the week, Lloyd was talking to Hilary Finch on these pages about the "great swaths of sentimentality" in the piece. In her efforts to gather in the biggest possible harvest of laughs she ignored this particular part of the field.

Lazuli, the boy with a sackful of cheap cosmetics and a head full of romantic notions, is a delectable role, given the right mezzo. Colette Alliot-Lugaz proved it in the Lyons Opera production, seen later in Paris and Edinburgh, which brought *L'Etoile* back to public notice. For Opera North, Pamela Helen Stephen offers a rougher and more hoydenish figure, whose brassy Scottish accent recalls unpleasant memories of Muriel Gray. The comedy is fine, the song which gives the title to the opera is not. Mary Hegarty as the Princess who is the object of Lazuli's dreams is much nearer the mark.

The successes come from the caricatures on stage, led by Anthony

Mee's King Ouf, who spends most of Act I disguised as a dustbin before putting on his royal scarlet and ermine. With John Hall's lugubrious Sirocco he makes the most of one of the score's best numbers, the "Duetto de la Chartreuse Verte", which praises the restorative properties of that drink. Chabrier deserved a case of the potassium for the mighty play he gave it. Kate Flowers and Mark Curtis, a

couple of diplomatic hangers-on, excel in the Kissing Quartet, another of Chabrier's best inventions. Opera North's chorus works fantastically and well. The orchestra responds easily to the light hand of the conductor Jean Yves Ossonce, who provides the only Gallic touch to a very English evening.

JOHN HIGGINS

NEW RELEASES

CABEZA DE VACA (12): Jarring Mexican epic about a Spanish conquistador captured by Indians. Director, Nicolas Escherman. Metro (071-437 0757).

ONLY THE LONELY (12): John Candy as a bachelor cop finding love and trying to escape his mother's apron strings. Liable romantic comedy from Home Alone director Chris Columbus. With Marisa Tomei. Metro (071-437 0757).

REGARDING HENRY (12): Master of the Universe turns into a play after suffering brain damage in a robbery. Sifted blend of the poignant and humorous from director Mike Nichols. Starring Harrison Ford, Annette Bening, Barbra Streisand. Metro (071-437 0757).

TRUE IDENTITY (12): Larry Henry versus out a laugh from a true Hollywood script about an actor in trouble with the Mob. With Frank Stallone. Director, John Dahl. Metro (071-437 0757).

CURRENT

ALICE (12): Woody Allen's comic fantasy about a Manhattan wife in crisis. Love and irony, but with a marvellous performance from Mia Farrow. Metro (071-437 0757).

CLOSE MY EYES (12): Sexual games between brother and sister one long hot London summer. Vividly

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BLUE HEART (12): New York's most powerful

alchemist in love. Directed by David Mamet. Metro (071-437 0757).

CHILD GIRLS (12): Inside Scotland and

a fine company in Rome. Metro (071-437 0757).

CAMMIE (12): A tearful comedy about

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COMEDY OF ERRORS (12): A

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FEATHERTONS (12): A new

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HALLS (12): A new

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FRANCESCO CLEMENTE (12): A

new production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

JAPAN FESTIVAL (12): A

new production of the classic

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NONI THEATRE - UMEWAKA (12): A

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THE NASH ENSEMBLE (12): A

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CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and where indicated with the symbol (L) on release across the country.

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LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA (12): A

new production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

FEATHERTONS (12): A new

production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

HALLS (12): A new

production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

FRANCESCO CLEMENTE (12): A

new production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

JAPAN FESTIVAL (12): A

new production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

NONI THEATRE - UMEWAKA (12): A

new production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

THE NASH ENSEMBLE (12): A

new production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

WORTHINGTON (12): A new

production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

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THE NASH ENSEMBLE (12): A

new production of the classic

comedy. Metro (071-437 0757).

Hanley, Ed Harris, director, Stephen Frears. Metro (071-437 0757).

PROSPERO'S BOOKS (12): Peter Greenaway's version of *The Tempest*, with John Gielgud as Prospero and the cast of Shakespeare's last through a jungle of eye-popping images. Brilliant but

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY (12): Good robot Arnold Schwarzenegger takes his revenge on a more sophisticated Terminator. A fine

THEMA & LOUISE (12): Daniel Craig and Louise Linton. A fine

TRULY, MADLY, DEEPLY (12): A fine

WEEKEND (12): A fine

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TELEVISION

6.00 Ceefax
6.30 Breakfast News begins with *Business Breakfast* which has the latest financial and business news from around the world followed at 6.55 by *Nicholas Witchell* and *Laurie Meyer* presenting news and topical reports, with regular business, sport, weather, regional news and travel bulletins.
9.05 Perfect Strangers, American comedy series. *The Little Train* to *London*. The first of two programmes about the Barnstaple to Lynton line in north Devon which opened in 1858. The 19½ mile scenic route took an hour-and-a-half to cover over passengers recall the glory days with the help of archive film (r).
10.00 News, regional news and weather. *10.05 Playdays* (s) 10.25 *Raggy Ann and Andy*. Animated adventures of two rag dolls.
11.00 News, regional news and weather. *11.05 Our House*, American sitcom. Comedy series (r). *11.55 Reviving Antiques*, John de Lancie, with advice on cleaning velvet, a tapestry-covered footstool and an embroidered vest.
12.00 News, regional news and weather. *12.05 Peter Bear Alert*, a documentary about the town on the Hudson Bay coast which unwillingly plays host to migrating polar bears. *12.55 Regional News* and weather.
1.00 One O'Clock News and weather.
1.30 Neighbours, (Ceefax) (s). *1.50 Four Square*, general knowledge knockout quiz game hosted by John Sachs (s).
2.15 Golf, Live coverage of the first round of the Epson grand prix from St Pierre Golf and Country club, Chesham. The top 54 in the Order of Merit are joined by 18 players with special invitations to battle for a total prize fund of £450,000. The commentators are Peter Alliss, Bruce Ritchie, Alex Hay, Clive Clark and Mike Hughesdon.
3.50 Fireman Sam, Animated series (r). *4.05 The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse* (r). *4.35 Alfonso Bonzo*, Episode five of the six-part comedy drama about a boy with a facility to swap at will (r) (s).
4.55 Newsweek, Juliet Morris and Krishnan Guru-Murthy report as Japan's leading children's choir, the O-Strong Little Singers of Tokyo, meet England's prize-winning Cantorus choir. *5.05 Blue Peter*, singer Chesney Hawkes performs his new single "Secrets of the Heart". Presented by Yvette Fielding, John Leslie and Dame Louise Jordan. (Ceefax).
5.35 Neighbours (r), (Ceefax) (s). Northern Ireland: Inside Ulster. *5.50 Six O'Clock News* with Anna Ford and Chris Lowe. Weather.
6.30 Regional News magazines. Northern Ireland: Neighbours.
7.00 Top of the Pops introduced by Nicky Campbell.
7.30 Eastenders, (Ceefax) (s).
8.00 'Allo 'Allo! The French Resistance farce continues with René (Gordon Kaye) in line for a medal from the Germans for collaboration and a bullet from the communists for being a traitor. Along the way, there are all the familiar jokes (r) (Ceefax).
8.30 Waiting For Gode, Michael Alkinta's perceptive comedy series about two eccentric residents of a retirement village, played to the hilt by Stephanie Cole and Graham Croston. (Ceefax) (s).
9.00 A Party Political Broadcast on behalf of the Conservative party.
9.10 News with Michael Burk. (Ceefax) Regional news and weather.
11.55 Weather.
NB: (s) indicates stereo

ITV VARIATIONS

ANGLIA
 As London except 5.10pm-5.40 Home and Away 5.50-6.00pm *Anglia News* 10.55pm *Anglia News* 11.25pm *Anglia News* 11.55pm *Anglia News* 12.25pm *Anglia News* 12.55pm *Anglia News* 1.25pm *Anglia News* 1.55pm *Anglia News* 2.25pm *Anglia News* 2.55pm *Anglia News* 3.25pm *Anglia News* 3.55pm *Anglia News* 4.25pm *Anglia News* 4.55pm *Anglia News* 5.25pm *Anglia News* 5.55pm *Anglia News* 6.25pm *Anglia News* 6.55pm *Anglia News* 7.25pm *Anglia News* 7.55pm *Anglia News* 8.25pm *Anglia News* 8.55pm *Anglia News* 9.25pm *Anglia News* 9.55pm *Anglia News* 10.25pm *Anglia News* 10.55pm *Anglia News* 11.25pm *Anglia News* 11.55pm *Anglia News* 12.25pm *Anglia News* 12.55pm *Anglia News* 1.25pm *Anglia News* 1.55pm *Anglia News* 2.25pm *Anglia News* 2.55pm *Anglia News* 3.25pm *Anglia News* 3.55pm *Anglia News* 4.25pm *Anglia News* 4.55pm *Anglia News* 5.25pm *Anglia News* 5.55pm *Anglia News* 6.25pm *Anglia News* 6.55pm *Anglia News* 7.25pm *Anglia News* 7.55pm *Anglia News* 8.25pm *Anglia 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No dividend at Trade Indemnity

By NEIL BENNETT, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

TRADE Indemnity, the trade credit insurer, has passed its half-year dividend after suffering a flood of claims caused by the rise in the number of company failures. The 0.9p interim dividend last year cost £986,000. TI said it would decide whether to pay a final when the results for the year became clear.

The group has set aside an additional £37.7 million to cover underwriting losses, almost the entire proceeds of its £39 million rights issue last May. This follows a 147 per cent rise in insurance claims in the first half of the year to £32.1 million net of reinsurance.

Gross claims totalled £83 million. The group said that the rate of company failures had risen by 83 per cent in the first half of the year to 3,825. While TI said the volume of liquidations and receiverships has reached a plateau, it warned shareholders that it is not likely to fall for another two years.

The new provisions include £13.5 million on commercial

mortgage indemnity business, which has been particularly hard hit by the recession. TI withdrew from this class of business last March but continues to receive additional claims.

The rise in claims and the additional provisions are likely to keep TI in losses for the full year. In 1990 the group reported losses of £28.8 million.

Charles McCarten, a director, said the group had warned its shareholders that funds from the rights issue would be used for further provisions, and that they would understand the need to abandon the dividend. The group is trying to compensate for the rise in claims by increasing premiums by an average of 40 per cent.

In the half year this helped gross premiums rise by 29 per cent to £68.1 million. The company said the real impact of the increases will be seen in the second half. TI has also boosted its net premium levels by reducing its brokers' commissions in July.

Racal to fight takeover

By MATTHEW BOND

RACAL Electronics yesterday officially rejected the takeover bid launched by Williams Holdings on Tuesday. The Racal board, led by Sir Ernest Harrison, the chairman, said the bid was "unsolicited and unwelcome" and "significantly undervalues Racal's longer-term potential".

In the stock market, Racal shares fell 1p to 56½p, while Williams lost 3p to 332p. At that level Williams' offer of three new shares for every 20 Racal values each Racal share at 49.8p. The slide in Williams' share price means the value of its offer for Racal has fallen from an initial £753 million to £702 million.

During the day it was announced that Sir Ernest had raised £5 million by selling 1.5 million shares in Vodafone, the cellular communications company whose total demerger from Racal was completed on Friday. Sir Ernest sold the Vodafone shares on Monday, the day before Williams launched its bid.

A Racal spokesman said Sir Ernest had sold the Vodafone shares to enable him to pay for the Racal options that he was granted under the demerger agreement. The share sale was disclosed because Sir Ernest remains non-executive chairman of Vodafone.

In its defence against the Williams bid, Racal has recalled Goldman Sachs to act alongside NM Rothschild.



Line of defence: Racal's Sir Ernest Harrison

Jardine offers HK deal on listing

From LULU YU IN HONG KONG

JARDINE Matheson Holdings has revealed plans to acquire a "trading only" status in Hong Kong, after reporting interim profits rose 10 per cent. Nigel Rich, the managing director, said the company would continue to comply with the colony's takeover rules, if it could have a primary listing in London and a trading status in Hong Kong.

Regulators have been worried that Jardine would be regulated in neither Hong Kong nor London.

Jardine earlier agreed to abide by Hong Kong rules for three years after its acquisition of a London primary listing. The decision to be permanently bound by them shows the group's reluctance to delist from the colony.

The group's net profits for the six months to end-June rose to US\$135.1 million from US\$123.3 million. The interim dividend is US\$3.4 cents, up 8 per cent.

The exchange began public consultation last week on whether to establish the "trading only" status for Jardine. There are fears that such a change might affect confidence in the territory as an international finance centre.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Scottish Power plans £150m NI grid link

SCOTTISH Power and Northern Ireland Electricity will today announce plans to build a £150 million interconnector linking Northern Ireland to the Scottish grid system. The 250 mw subsea cable will underpin government ambitions to privatise power generation and supply in Northern Ireland.

A shortfall in Belfast's capacity is likely to follow the expected closure of the 1958 340 mw Belfast West coal-fired plant in the mid-Nineties. Scottish Power is among 13 companies interested in buying generating capacity in Northern Ireland. Completion of a subsea link to Scotland is a key plank in the government's privatisation ambitions because it would help ensure Northern Ireland electricity prices are not far out of line with the rest of the UK.

Merivale falls sharply

COMMERCIAL property development losses, property writedowns and increased interest charges were largely responsible for a collapse in pre-tax profits at Merivale Moore from £7.37 million to £615,000 in the year to end-June. Earnings per share plunged to 12.7p (35.8p), although the final dividend is maintained at 7.75p, making an unchanged total of 10.5p.

Crown calls for £4.8m

CROWN Communications, the broadcasting group which owns LBC, the London news radio station, is making a £4.8 million emergency rights issue to reduce debts, after the group lost £4.7 million in the half year to end-March. The three for eight issue, at 45p a share, could leave almost half the company with Darling Downs, an Australian television company.

Japan's brokers slide

JAPAN'S big four brokers, bruised by scandals, issued gloomy forecasts. One of them, Yamakichi Securities, expects an interim loss of ¥12 billion (£51.7 million) - the first for 28 years. Nikko, Daiwa and Nomura said earnings for the half year to September 30 would be about 70 per cent down on last time.

The Nikkei index is 9 per cent lower than at the end of May and 40 per cent below its 1989 peak. In the past six months, about 330 million shares a day have been traded, against 950 million in the late 1980s.

Abbott Mead raises payout

ABBOTT Mead Vickers, the advertising group, is raising its interim dividend from 2.7p to 2.8p, despite a decline in pre-tax profits to £1.9 million in the six months to end-June (£2.11 million). Earnings per share fell to 8.63p (9.6p) and turnover was £73 million (£63.3 million), boosted by a first-time contribution from BBDO. The shares firmed 5p to 333p.

Steel Burrill advances

STEEL Burrill Jones Group, the insurance broker, lifted taxable profits from £4.73 million to £5.29 million in the six months to end-June. Turnover increased to £20.5 million, against £15.1 million last time. Earnings per share edged up from 9.89p to 9.92p. The company is raising its interim dividend from 4p to 4.25p. The shares rose 5p to 339p.

Fitch passes payout

FTTCH RS, the design group, has passed its interim dividend after exceptional losses pushed the company into the red in what the group described as "the worst UK trading conditions we have ever experienced". Last year it paid an interim dividend of 1.5p.

The company dived to a pre-tax loss of £675,000 (£459,000 profit) in the half year to end-June. Taxable operating profits slumped to £77,000 (£459,000), while redundancy payments and provisions for unoccupied properties led to an exceptional loss of £752,000.

Sky TV 'in sight of breaking even'

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT, FINANCIAL EDITOR

LOSSES of Sky Television have come down from about £10 million a week after the merger with BSB to less than £1.5 million. Rupert Murdoch, chairman and chief executive of The News Corporation, said in the group's annual report. "The break-even point is at last in sight," he said.

He said there were strong financial, marketing and political reasons for making the compromise merger instead of letting BSB die. More than half the running costs of the combined BSkyB satellite service have since been cut, and the group reports that there were unexpectedly high dish sales of 313,000 in the first half of this year.

Mr Murdoch said many lessons had been learnt from the severe liquidity problems that forced the international media group, which owns The Times, into refinancing its debt during the year to the end of June. "There is scope to do much more," he said.

"Thanks to stringent cost control, difficult staff reductions and the sale of some magazines and smaller business, our major projects can

continue towards completion."

In Britain, the group's newspapers were hit by the general fall in advertising and circulation and the changeover to new colour presses. The Times was the only newspaper to see its advertising market share grow compared to last year, thanks to the first full year's publication of the Saturday Review section and the new colour facility. The Sun increased profits against the trend.

Mr Murdoch said the group's Australian newspapers had battered down for a long recession and were profitable.

In America, Twentieth Television, television production arm of Twentieth Century Fox, is being reorganised with plans for aggressive expansion.

After News Corp recorded its first loss after abnormal items, including the cost of refinancing, Mr Murdoch said stronger profits and cash flows would follow. By 1993-4 the group planned to cover interest charges at least three times by profits before interest and depreciation.

Alumasc advances to £5.85m

HIGHER interest income helped Alumasc, the beer keg, guttering and components maker, to lift pre-tax profits from £4.85 million to £5.85 million in the year to end-June. Turnover was down £3.4 million to £41.8 million. Final dividend is 6.8p (6.15p), making 10p (9p) for the year.

COMPANY BRIEFS

SPANDEX (Int)
Pre-tax: £2.18m (£2.21m)
EPS: 11.9p (12.8p)
Div: 1.9p (1.75p)

SECURE TRUST GROUP
Pre-tax: £3.13m (£2.72m)
EPS: 14.5p (12.5p)
Div: 3.5p (3p)

STAG FURNITURE (Int)
Pre-tax: £932,000
EPS: 8.2p (5.2p)
Div: 2.5p (2p)

WORCESTER GROUP (Int)
Pre-tax: £1.68m (£2.01m)
EPS: 2.4p (5.4p)
Div: 1.33p (1.33p)

NORTH SEA ASSETS (Int)
Pre-tax: £271,000
EPS: 1.91p (1.24p)
Div: Nil

Turnover grew to £28.8m (£20.6m). Company said that start-up costs in Italy, Austria and Switzerland will suppress short-term profitability.

Interim results. Gross income was £6.78m (£5.85m). OBC, acquired in April, will make a positive contribution in the second half.

Last time's profit was £838,000. Extraordinary credit of £275,000. Balance sheet is strong with gearing below 9 per cent.

Earnings shown are fully diluted. Basic earnings were 1.8p (5.4p). Board is confident of a satisfactory full-year result.

Last time's profit was £590,000. Turnover jumped to £15m (£8.58m). There was an exceptional credit of £45,000.

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سكزا من الامم

Sick Asda badly needs treatment

COMMENT

Rarely has a company needed a top flight chief executive so badly as Asda for three months. Given the scope of the task to be tackled, only supermen need apply.

Once Asda swept all before it in its heartland territory of Yorkshire and the North. Its bright and breezy value for money approach offered a keen price advantage to customers. Margins were boosted by a much heavier non-food offering than was customary at any of its leading high street rivals.

In more recent times, Asda has become the sick man of the business, while Tesco, under a cloud at the beginning of the decade, has pulled itself up by the bootstraps in a spectacular fashion. Shareholders at Asda have heard rather too many promises that change was on the way. But on the basis of yesterday's surprise downgrading of profits and consequent 28 per cent fall in share price they deserve nothing less than a detailed reappraisal of prospects from their board and a plan for action as a matter of urgency.

Holding Asda shares over the past ten years has been a painful affair. They have hardly risen at all, while Tesco's have risen 14 fold. Even the unexciting FT-SE 100 index has roughly doubled. The pain became even more severe in the past two years. In that time £100 worth of Asda shares has shrunk to about £50.

The City has been disenchanted with Asda's management for some time. But yesterday's revelations suggest that the problems may now be even more deep rooted than anyone suspected. The much vaunted purchase of 60 superstores from Gateway, it now appears, merely papered over the cracks. It gave Asda a substantial increase in selling space.

But there has been no increase in market share and the group has been landed with heavy borrowings as a result of the £700 million purchase price. Financially the group is over-borrowed by the standards of its rivals with

debts of £875 million and rising. Gearing was 72 per cent last time with little prospects that it will fall rapidly.

The hard question for shareholders, and one which may have occurred to prospective chief executives of the group is whether or not Asda is worth saving in its present form?

One solution might possibly be a rescue bid from Icosseles, the buyout vehicle which took over Gateway, but whether the bankers have the stomach for the further borrowings that would be involved looks unlikely. Asda's fellow partners in the European joint buying consortium, Carrefour and Metro have reportedly been over the group armed with a fine toothcomb. But there are limits to what anyone will pay to achieve a foothold in the British grocery

market. Perhaps Asda has become a case for treatment by an institutionally backed consortium on the lines of the Paternoster rescue of Woolworth. But to blame the present troubles on that hoary old scapegoat, recession, simply will not do.

Robin's point

Robin Leigh Pemberton, Governor of the Bank of England, has raised himself again after the pummelling he received over the BCCI affair to deliver a forceful, almost Bundesbank-like appeal for price stability. Accompanying his plea, issued before a Black Country, not City, audience, was an endorsement of the government view that the economy is already recovering from the recession, a

message doubtless intended to assuage fears among cabinet ministers that the Governor was being less than helpful with his analysis of the economy. After all, was it not his last *Quarterly Bulletin* which gave us the catchy "bumping along the bottom" reading of current developments.

Having provided the government with support on recovery, Mr Leigh-Pemberton sought to urge caution upon those who want to lower interest rates to ensure that the recovery is more than a statistical upturn. A government facing a general election must be sorely tempted to try to give the economy a pre-election fillip to the economy. The Opposition is crying out for whole points to be cut off base rate, as too are large parts of the business community which have yet to feel any upturn.

Mr Leigh-Pemberton, argued that pursuing price stability to guarantee sustainable recovery was now the global orthodoxy.

Wise men would naturally understand. But, to make sure, he provided six reverse commandments, or "economic fallacies" on inflation. These were: that some measure of inflation can be tolerated as a means of creating employment; that exchange rate depreciation can be used as a means of increasing activity or competitiveness; that investment can be stimulated by discrete acts of policy and in the absence of sustainable growth; that reducing interest rates helps to reduce inflation; that the sign of a healthy economy is low or negative real interest rates; that there is a level of inflation which is acceptable and worth settling for, at which point the pursuit of price stability can be relaxed or even abandoned. Thus spoke the Governor.

The central warning was directed at the Chancellor. Having been so tantalisingly close to the virtuous circle of low inflationary growth in the mid-Eighties, and blown it, the government must, at all costs, not repeat the mistake, however difficult the political corner it finds itself in.

Beazer bid and three new boys bring a shine to Hanson's halo

THE atmosphere at Hanson headquarters at Grosvenor Place must be relaxed and cheerful after the company bathed in City approval not once, but twice, this week.

Not only did the pundits consider Hanson's £330 million bid for Beazer a positive, opportunistic move, the company capitalised on this good-will by making the long-awaited appointment yesterday of three new non-executive directors to enhance the board and affirm its commitment to the principles of good corporate governance.

Hanson has had a testing time with critics since the company bought 2.8 per cent of ICI in May. It was considered that Lord Hanson, and Lord White, the company's American chief, had for the first time in a long while made a wrong move. Moreover, it appeared they had misread the City's mood that the time was right for a takeover.

The time may have been right for a takeover but not for the purchase of ICI, a company perceived as successful, a little staid, and important to Britain's international prestige. There was an outcry in both Westminster and Brussels and if the two 70-year-old lords viewed a takeover of ICI or even a friendly merger as their ultimate swansong, they soon realised they were just about the only ones who viewed the matter with equanimity.

Though ICI is loath to admit it, Hanson's sudden emergence on its share register galvanised the chemicals group. ICI had already announced a big internal revision designed to sell all non-core assets and stick with businesses where it could be a world-class player. At the very least, Lord Hanson's investment pushed ICI to make a lot more noise about this restructuring and hurry along the flow-through benefits.

The negative reaction to Hanson's purchase has in turn encouraged the conglomerate to make sure it behaves like a good corporate citizen and



Joining the board: David Hardy, Simon Keswick and Jonathan Scott-Barrett

leaves no room for criticism that the company is failing to comply with City mores. Certainly, there was some pressure brought on the company by institutional investors for Hanson to broaden the experience of the board and increase the input of the non-executive members.

The new appointees, which take the number of non-executive directors to five compared with 12 executive

directors to the world that we are good corporate ambassadors." Sir Gordon said he looked at more than 100 names but did not resort to Probed, the body set up for this purpose by the Bank of England and various institutions. "Once it was out that we were looking, I had many expressions of interest and recommendations."

There is little overlap between the interests of David Hardy, Simon Keswick and

Jonathan Scott-Barrett, the three new directors. Mr Hardy, aged 61, is chairman of the London Docklands Development Corporation and former executive chairman of Globe Investment Trust.

Formerly based in Hong Kong, Mr Keswick, aged 49, is an executive director of Jardine Matheson Holdings and was the chairman and chief executive of Jardines from 1983 until mid-1988. Mr Scott-Barrett, aged 47, is the youngest of the new appointees and this is his first non-executive directorship. He is a senior executive of Centaur Communications and publisher of *Money Marketing*, the financial magazine.

The three will join the board on October 1 and attend their first board meeting in December alongside the other two non-executives, The Hon Charles Price II and Sir Christopher Harding.

Mr Hardy said he was a great admirer of Hanson and had become familiar with the company and its chairman while he was at Globe. He said that the roles of non-executive directors had developed a great deal since he assumed his first non-executive role in 1973.

"I have served with some who were fairly ineffectual but others have been real needlers to performance. I believe devotedly in the non-executive role and look forward to sitting on various committees and making a positive contribution," he said.

Mr Scott-Barrett believes his main strength will lie in financial communications. Sir Gordon said he thought Mr Scott-Barrett would be able to keep the board informed of how the small investor was

viewing the market and in particular, what they thought about Hanson.

The appointments are also important to dispel rumours that have permeated some City circles since the resignation of Rudolph Agnew from the board in June. Mr Agnew, the former chairman of Consolidated Gold Fields, which was bought by Hanson in 1989, resigned his non-executive directorship amid allegations by others that the non-executive directors were not informed of important decisions, such as the purchase of the ICI stake, until after the event.

Certainly there is sometimes a distinction to be made between the sharing of market-sensitive information and keeping the board informed, but Hanson cannot afford the City to speculate that the company merely pays lip service to non-executive directors. The new appointments will hopefully serve to quash such speculation.

ANGELA MACKAY

Germans urged to be tough on EMU

THE Bundesbank yesterday urged the German government not to compromise over European monetary union, and if necessary not to accept a treaty should attempt to water down tough German preconditions.

In a toughly worded statement to the finance committee of the Bundestag, the federal parliament, Hans Tietmeyer, the Bundesbank's vice president, gave a cautious welcome to a recent controversial draft treaty proposed by the Dutch EC presidency, but said the proposal did not go far enough.

In particular, the Bundesbank is adamantly opposed to attempts to leave exchange rate policy under political control, arguing that such a system would render irrelevant the now widely accepted concept of independence for a central European bank.

The Dutch draft treaty, produced last week, was heavily criticised by Italy, whose government fears it would be left in the second division of a two-tier Europe, under the proposal.

Dr Tietmeyer endorsed some of the key positions of the Dutch draft treaty, which set out as conditions for monetary union the approximation of inflation rates, the elimination of excessive budget deficits, at least two years of currency stability within the

ably its most controversial point, and unlikely to be accepted by others because this would increase the likelihood of a two-speed EMU.

Dr Tietmeyer said: "The result [of transitional arrangements] would be the creation of a grey area for monetary competency with the consequence that national monetary policy would be constrained, while a supra-national competency would not yet exist."

In his statement, Dr Tietmeyer also warned that the onus for greater convergence were not good at present. "The economic divergence after the welcome successes of the 1980s," he said, citing large budget deficits, inflation differentials of several percentage points and diverging unit labour costs. These "represent in our view grave obstacles on the road to EMU".

Dr Tietmeyer said that if intergovernmental confidence, due to complete its work in time for the European summit in December, "has a series of unresolved problems and questions". The German government, he said, should only accept proposals guaranteeing that the "first European money would be stable money".

WOLFGANG MÜNCHER
European Business Correspondent

Tietmeyer: grave obstacles

NEW INVESTMENT RATES FROM THE BRISTOL & WEST INTERNATIONAL

Effective 26th September 1991

ACCOUNT	AMOUNT INVESTED	GROSS RATE OF INTEREST PA.	GROSS C.A.R.*
GUERNSEY GROSS 90 DAY ACCOUNT	£100,000+ £25,000+ £5,000+	11.15% 10.65% 9.90%	—
GUERNSEY GROSS INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNT	£100,000+ £25,000+ £5,000+ £1,000+ £1+	10.65% 10.40% 9.65% 8.40% 7.90%	—
GUERNSEY MONTHLY INCOME ACCOUNT	£100,000 £25,000 £5,000	10.62% 10.16% 9.48%	11.15% 10.65% 9.90%
THE INTERNATIONAL BOND (CLOSED ISSUE)	£25,000+ £5,000+	11.25% 10.95%	—
GUERNSEY GROSS INTEREST BOND (CLOSED ISSUE)*	£5,000	11.35%	—

Effective 1st October 1991

INTERNATIONAL BOND ISSUE II	£50,000 £25,000 £5,000	11.75% 11.50% 11.25%	
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BRISTOL & WEST INTERNATIONAL

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Flying Golobs call BT's tune

THE perils of working for an integrated securities business have become all too apparent for the Golob brothers, part of Watburg's team of telephone network analysts. They now find themselves backing up the group's role as advisers to the government's sale of BT with a voluminous background research circular, while keeping their own opinions on BT shares to themselves. James Golob, aged 36, joined the group five years ago and swiftly recruited his brother Peter, two years his junior, from a rival house. A unique working partnership within the financial community, they are known as the Flying Golob Brothers, not because their name means dove in Russian, but because a City way once like a circus act. Their name still causes problems. James maintains a computerised list of the written misspellings in letters or restaurant bookings. So far, it runs to 75 entries. Renditions range from the predictable

Grobol and Bogol to a mind-boggling 'Irish' version, 'O' Globb.

Late, by George

REGULARS who suffer "the drain", British Rail's shuttle between Waterloo and Bank, will be intrigued to learn of yesterday's official excuse for the cancellation of the service. Since the train has been cancelled at least twice a week for the past three weeks, the notice board used to inform passengers of the reason is so over-used that it is all but illegible. One brave City com-

muter asked a senior-looking BR official for the real reason. "He said it was because a man called George had failed to turn up and he was the only man who knew how to work the signal panel," my bemused source reveals. Recalling that Pratt's, the St James's dining club, calls all its doormen George, regardless of their true name, my source is now wondering if BR is trying to improve its image by adopting similar upper-crust practices.

Relativity theory

ALWAYS one to go against the trend, Sir James Goldsmith has, it seems, been preaching about the potential for business in China and Hong Kong. So much so that his stepson Robin Birley, aged 33, son of Mark Birley, owner of Annabel's, yesterday opened a sandwich bar inside The Bond Building in Hong Kong. He already has five sandwich bars in the City of London — and a sixth due to open next month in Canary Wharf. "Jimmy Goldsmith went to China last year and came back very positive about the opportunities there," says

Mark Lloyd, a friend of Robin. "He has been encouraging Robin, as a kind of mentor, but he is not involved in the business as such." Birley opened his first sandwich bar in Fenchurch Street in 1979 and the business has been self-funding since. "He has never had a penny from either his father or his step father," claims Lloyd.

Yours, in sport

RELATIONS between Lord Hanson and ICI seem to have become friendlier since Hanson's agreed £351 million takeover bid for Beazer, the construction group. On Tuesday, within hours of the bid being made public, Hanson was honouring an agreement to reopen the George Hotel in his home town of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. During lunch at the hotel — where Hanson, as a young man, used to go dancing — he revealed to his companions that he had been allowed to land his helicopter nearby, on the edge of ICI's Huddersfield sports ground provided he took up "no more than 2.8 per cent".

CAROL LEONARD



Portfolio

PLATINUM
© Times Newspapers Limited
DAILY DIVIDEND
£4,000
Claims required for +53 points

Claimants should ring 0254-53272

[illegible]

143	81	Dolean Packaging	140	144	+2	6.7	4.0	12.7
144	181	Ferguson Int'l	280	288	+8	18.7	9.9	13.0
81	39	Fitch-RS	45	47	+1	2.0	4.9	-
38	20	Gears Group	31	33	—	2.7	0.4	0.9
203	63	Gold Growlers	200	205	+5	11.1	0.6	10.6

81	25	Goodhead	42	48	0.7	1.5	-
29	11	Hunterprint	30	214	-	-	-
60	42	Lopez	50	52	-	-	0.1
200	100	More O'Ferrall	205	272	17.5	0.5	0.4
04	50	NASC Group	05	70	4.7	0.9	0.6
03	03	03-13-04	03	03	0.0	0.0	0.0

110	67	Delta Foods	112	120	1.2	0.5	
127	87	Quanta	113	120	0.6	0.0	0.0
255	175	St Ann Gp	252	257	0.7	2.0	14.1
31	124	Saitchi Top	184	184	-	-	-
128	49	Shawmut	187	130	0.1	4.0	0.5
100	14.0	Smith, Bond	187	130	0.1	0.0	0.0

470	244	Smith	Delve	280	342	-	12.7	3.4	14.8
629	425	Smith	(Jeff)	632	635	+6	-	-	-
320	108	Usher	Wether	163	180	-	7.3	3.8	43.5
231	59	WPP		90	97	-	-	-	1.3
285	184	Waco		263	270	+	11.0	4.1	11.7
111	131	Whitbourne	(J)	229	276	-	10.6	5.1	18.1

427	305	Walsingham (ny)	234	230	-4	13.7	5.7	10.1
10	44	Waverley Cam	5	7	-	-	-	-

PROPERTY

120	78	Allan Lon	82	95	+0	47	5.0	40.2
90	58	Arachan	58	83	-	-	-	-
106	85	Ayda	84	87	+1	2.6	2.8	87.2
48	30	B-H Group	34	38	-	1.3	3.8	-
88	45	Baker Harris	60	85	-	2.5	6.2	11.6

485	225	Bliss (P)	476	485	-	23.3	4.9	19.7
85	47	Bourne Ind	45	52	-	2.7	5.5	-
150	115	Brookburg	145	180	+1	4.8	3.3	14.3
88	58	Bruckner	62	67	-	-	-	-
328	315	Br. Land	327	332	+7	7.7	2.3	21.0

212	191	Brinson	204	206	-	0.9	4.8	18.0
48	36	Berkard	43	44	+	1.2	2.6	18.4
303	278	Cap & Coleman	230	240	+1	14.9	9.3	18.0
385	300	Carlin Prop	175	220	-	3.3	1.8	38.1
840	475	Chascofield	505	530	-	24.7	4.8	16.1
	45	Chascofield	45					

101	31	Carbide	40	47	-	-	-
102	32	Cast. Wagon	50	50	-	1.11	2.0
103	33	Clayform	30	36	+2	2.7	2.7
104	34	Control Bars	17	16	-1	0.5	0.5
105	35	Dagun	250	260	+10	32.0	3.0
106	36	Drum. Engine	20	20	-	0.3	7.5

116	27	Delfino, Kenneth	104	109	—	—	—	—
130	50	Deberghem, Tawson	102	107	—	8.0	7.5	12
18	4	De Morgan	6	8	—	—	—	—
166	123	Dancora	120	128	—	7.3	8.0	28
715	595	Darvart, Mops	536	530	—	11.0	1.8	—
29	5	Deaton, Tami	—	—	—	—	—	—

277	850	Estates & Agency	240	200	-	8.4	3.4
130	83	Estates Real	118	125	+5	8.0	4.8
146	93	Estates Of Canada	140	150	-	8.0	3.4
40	30	Five Dates	20	31	-	-	-
75	80	Fletcher King	55	80	-	2.1	0.3

378	279	Frogmore	318	333	--	16.8	5.3
198	90	Urminger	130	140	--	7.0	5.4
253	180	Gr Portland	228	223	+1	13.3	8.0
387	186	Greycoat	278	216	-2	8.3	3.3
70	48	HM Land	53	56	--	--	--

24	24	Holland Sp	24	54	01	02
70	43	Kambro Countryw	52	54	27.3	02
719	633	Kambro	660	660	27.3	42
685	578	Do 'A	627	636	+1	27.3 4.3 21
78	18	Harow Crude	10	15	-	27.3 4

225	90	Herring	185	185	225	72
230	125	Feet	30	30	175	72
27	28	Herring	31	31	175	72
188	147	Herring	184	184	175	72
200	225	Jenny	200	200	175	72
200	225	Jenny	200	200	175	72

54	28	Los Merchants Soc.	78	51	0	4.8	0.0
84	24	Los & Metro	49	50	-	-	-
324	8	Los Serranos	74	9	-	-	-
558	437	MEPC	487	502	+8	25.3	5.1

185	130	McKay Sisco	145	100	0	0.5	5.7
43	24	Markoski	37	25	0	0.5	18.8
245	123	Martinez Moore	140	100	+10	14.0	0.5
8	7	Martin	35	40	-	-	-
43	24	Martinez	35	40	-	-	-

99	22	Mountain	22	25	-	7	11.3
12	515	Mountain	104	11	-	20.0	1.9
131	104	Mucklow (Adj)	129	132	+2	7.3	5.6
43	38	New Canadian	35	42	+	11	11.8
13	79	Osney Est	0	0	+	11	11.8

143	80	Power Corp	115	130	-	5.7	7.7	6.5
137	101	Prp Security	135	130	-2	5.5	3.5	47.5
34	2	Regten		24	-			
105	88	Regulair	76	78	-	5.5	7.7	6.5
112	22	Rosenthal	27	29	-			

171	160	Rowleson	22	25	1.8	1.1	13.8
20	13	St Modwen Prop	22	25	0.7	2.0	11.0
93		Ilwaka	43	47	-	-	-
176	113	Scot Mel	126	129	9.0	7.0	17.3
127	100	Shafesbury	106	113	-	-	-

23	11	Stream	13	18	..	2.7	8.0	3.5
41	21	Sucker Goldmine	28	32	..	1.4	5.5	73.8
204	203	Slough Estates	277	261	+2	0.1	0.4	12.6
112	76	Southern Prop	78	82	+4
163	32	St. Paul	18	25	-7	2.8	9.8	41.3
87	84	St. Paul	81	87	-6

a Ex dividend s Ex att b Forecast dividend e Interim
 payment passed f Price at suspension g Dividend and
 yield exclude a special payment h Pre-merger figures n
 Forecast earnings o Ex other r Ex rights s Ex scrip or
 share split t Tax-free .. No significant data.

SEC	Off	Chng	Yld	SEC	Off	Chng	Yld	SEC	Off	Chng	Yld	SEC	Off	Chng	Yld	SEC	Off	Chng	Yld	SEC	Off	Chng	Yld	SEC	Off	Chng	Yld	SEC	Off	Chng	Yld								
ABNEY UNIT TRUST MANAGERS LTD	35.57	41.26	+0.68	0.75	Capl	23.54	19.17	+0.37	3.32	UK Unit	14.64	14.54	-0.10	4.10	BayComm	19.75	19.75	+0.17	1.97	Inf Mgt Inc	53.0	52.84	-0.11	0.94	High Yield	20.17	20.17	+0.18	0.82	High High	19.43	19.39	-0.04	0.85	Supply Acc	69.94	69.94	+0.18	3.05
ABN 1982	35.57	41.26	+0.68	0.75	Chowhills	23.54	19.17	+0.37	3.32	UK Unit	14.64	14.54	-0.10	4.10	Cap Gen	19.75	19.75	+0.17	1.97	Inf Mgt Inc	53.0	52.84	-0.11	0.94	High Yield	20.17	20.17	+0.18	0.82	High High	19.43	19.39	-0.04	0.85	Supply Acc	69.94	69.94	+0.18	3.05
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ABN 1982	35.57	41.26	+0.68	0.75	Chowhills	23.54	19.17	+0.37	3.32	UK Unit	14.6																												

MONEY MARKETS

[illegible]

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Bank Rates for Sept 18	Range	Close	1 month	3 months
Amercian	5,578.74-1.0000	5,578.74-1.0000	5,578.74-1.0000	5,578.74-1.0000
Brussels	29.82-80	29.82-80	29.82-80	29.82-80
Copenhagen	11,290.51-11,279.0	11,290.51-11,279.0	11,290.51-11,279.0	11,290.51-11,279.0
Dublin	1,000.00-1.0000	1,000.00-1.0000	1,000.00-1.0000	1,000.00-1.0000
Frankfurt	2,908.1-2,917.4	2,908.1-2,917.4	2,908.1-2,917.4	2,908.1-2,917.4
London	948.90-948.90	948.90-948.90	948.90-948.90	948.90-948.90
Madrid	178.47-178.18	178.47-178.18	178.47-178.18	178.47-178.18
Milan	2,177.38-2,181.04	2,177.38-2,181.04	2,177.38-2,181.04	2,177.38-2,181.04
Montreal	1,881.1-1,879.86	1,881.1-1,879.86	1,881.1-1,879.86	1,881.1-1,879.86
New York	1,732.51-1,741.0	1,732.51-1,741.0	1,732.51-1,741.0	1,732.51-1,741.0
Oslo	11,389.0-11,441.8	11,389.0-11,441.8	11,389.0-11,441.8	11,389.0-11,441.8
Paris	5,578.74-5,578.74	5,578.74-5,578.74	5,578.74-5,578.74	5,578.74-5,578.74
Stockholm	10,559.0-10,634.2	10,559.0-10,634.2	10,559.0-10,634.2	10,559.0-10,634.2
Tokyo	2,917.4-2,933.4	2,917.4-2,933.4	2,917.4-2,933.4	2,917.4-2,933.4
Zurich	2,908.1-2,917.4	2,908.1-2,917.4	2,908.1-2,917.4	2,908.1-2,917.4
Source: <i>Statist</i>				

Premium = pr. Discount = d.

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Discount Market: London	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Treasury Bills (90-day)	2 1/2%	2 1/2%	2 1/2%	2 1/2%	2 1/2%	2 1/2%	2 1/2%	2 1/2%	2 1/2%
Prime Bank Bills (90-day)	1 1/2%	1 1/2%	1 1/2%	1 1/2%	1 1/2%	1 1/2%	1 1/2%	1 1/2%	1 1/2%
Starting Money Rates	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Interbank	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Credit: 10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Local Authority Depos.	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Starting CDs:	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Discount CDs:	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%
Building Society CDs:	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%	5.5%-5.7%

EUROPEAN MONEY IMPORTS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	Call
Dollar:	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%
Deutschmarks:	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%
Francs:	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%
Swiss Francs:	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%	5 1/2%-5 1/2%
Yen:	7-7 1/2%	7-7 1/2%	7 1/2%-8 1/2%	8 1/2%-9 1/2%	9-9 1/2%

GOLD AND PRECIOUS METALS

Bullion: Spot \$346.70-347.00	Close: \$346.25-346.75	High: \$346.25-346.75
Low: \$346.50-347.00	Kingsgold: \$347.00-347.50	Week: \$346.75-347.00
Bovengold: Oct \$361.75-362.75 (\$347.00-348.00)	Nov \$361.50-362.50 (\$348.00-347.80)	
Platinum: \$555.10 (\$535.30)	Silver: \$4.08 (\$2.945)	Palladium: \$92.25 (\$47.50)

ENT TRUSTS

1997	High	Low	Company	Price	Offer	Change	Day	52 Wk	YTD	LONG
35	25	25	Atlantic Richfield Inc	30	30	0.00	1	38	43.2	
118	118	118	Avco Corp	118	118	0.00	1	118	118	
72	72	72	Avco Corp	72	72	0.00	1	72	72	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
137	137	137	Avco Corp	137	137	0.00	1	137	137	
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(day's range 80.9-81.1).

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions in the Department of the Interior, under the act of March 3, 1879, entitled "An Act to provide for the better management of the public lands, and for other purposes."

Position	Name
Secretary of the Interior	John W. Foster
Assistant Secretary	William H. Hunt
Chief of Bureau of Land Management	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of Indian Affairs	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of Reclamation	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of Geographical Names	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of Mineral Lands	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of Fish and Game	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of Forests and Ranges	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Monuments	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Parks	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Historic Sites	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Antiquities	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Cemeteries	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Graves	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Shrines	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Sanctuaries	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Reserves	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Parks and Monuments	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Historic Sites and Monuments	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Antiquities and Historic Sites	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Cemeteries and Graves	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Shrines and Sanctuaries	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Reserves and Parks	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Parks and Monuments	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Historic Sites and Monuments	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Antiquities and Historic Sites	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Cemeteries and Graves	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Shrines and Sanctuaries	John W. Foster
Chief of Bureau of National Reserves and Parks	John W. Foster

Teaching the art of making wooden tools could help African economies more than financial aid, Chris Partridge reports

Sharing simple secrets for third world survival

In Zimbabwe, a carpenter's plough, used for cutting grooves, can cost about a year's wages. The staggering cost of tools, which are all imported, prevents most of the carpenters trained in the country's technical schools from taking up their craft.

A project run by the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) in Rugby, Warwickshire, aims to offer practical help by drawing on a pool of knowledge that has been forgotten in developed countries. The group is designing the tools that every carpenter in Britain used to make for himself before he could call himself a master craftsman.

"We have forgotten that a carpenter can make his own tools rather than go to the store for them," says David Poston, the manager of the group's rural workshops programme.

In wealthy countries, this does not matter because tools are plentiful and cheap. But in Africa, where even the simplest tools are scarce and expensive and specialised ones often unobtainable, the ability to produce their own tools could enable thousands of village carpenters to make a proper living and contribute to the development of their local economies.

The idea of designing tools that

"I had realised that a lot of the craftsmen being trained would not be able to afford tools, and having the skills but not the tools is criminal"



Struggling with primitive tools

could be easily and cheaply made by village craftsmen came to Aaron Moore — a consultant with ITDG, who has worked in Zambia — after he recalled the tools that his grandfather had made.

Mr Moore says: "I had realised that a lot of the craftsmen being trained would not be able to afford tools, and having the skills but not the tools is criminal. I remembered my grandfather's tools, which I had been given, so I knew what could be done."

Artisans in Africa have no idea that simple techniques can be used to make a good, though basic, set of tools from readily available materials, such as wood or scrap-metal parts from motor cars.

"They had no experience of wood planes, only imported steel planes," Mr Moore says.

When he returned to Britain, he approached the group with his designs and the project began. Social economists were brought in to ensure that the designs would be

affordable and would meet a real need, and Mr Moore went on a blacksmithing course. Gradually, a range of designs was established.

Coil springs from lorries were transformed into steel-handled chisels. Leaf springs from Land-Rovers were beaten into plough blades. Even the complex shapes for braces, auger bits, gages and vices were all produced. A design manual showing how to make them was produced, and a revised and enlarged edition is due out soon.

The next step is to train carpenters in the necessary skills. This is being done initially by training instructors, who will then pass on the skills to schools in Africa.

The first instructor is Musa Sithole, formerly the head of woodwork at the teacher-training college in Harare, Zimbabwe. He believes the tools could make a significant contribution to his country's economy.

"There is a demand for products such as chairs, stools and tables that, with adequate tools, could be produced locally," Mr Sithole says.

If carpenters are given the tools they can produce goods to satisfy local demand, he says. A strong local economy might then start to grow, which would be worth more than cash aid.



Musa Sithole: hand-made tools may bring jobs and prosperity

A mother at 50 plus?

A TECHNIQUE developed in Australia may allow women to freeze their ova and conceive into their fifties. The technique, developed primarily to help women made infertile by disease, has angered some feminists and anti-abortion campaigners. Researchers at the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, have asked the Victoria state government for permission to thaw frozen human ova and test them.

Venus mystery

THE Magellan spacecraft has found the solar system's longest channel so far on the planet Venus. The channel is a mile wide and runs unbroken for 4,200 miles, longer than the Nile, Earth's longest river. Its formation is a puzzle because there are few liquids that flow at Venusian temperatures of 864F. The most likely candidate, says Steve Saunders, a Magellan project scientist, is a high-speed lava flow from a volcanic eruption.

Tags of energy

REFRIGERATORS, dishwashers, ovens and other appliances sold in the European Community may soon have to carry labels showing how much energy they consume. The European Commission has published a proposal intended to put pressure on manufacturers to produce energy-efficient goods by making it easier for consumers to choose them. Manufacturers would have to attach uniform EC-wide labels and provide brochures with more information about their product's energy consumption.

Brain talk

THE distinction between vowels and consonants appears to be fundamental to the way the brain handles language. Roberto Cabeiri, of the Maggior Hospital, Bologna, Italy, reports in this week's *Nature* that one patient with brain damage caused by a stroke was unable to write vowels but had no trouble with consonants, while another made spelling errors only with vowels. The research suggests that vowels and consonants may be selected in different parts of the brain.

NIGEL HAWKES

Ancient Rome helps modern science

ITALIAN physicists have been busy this summer recovering lead from a Roman freighter that went down off Sardinia 2,000 years ago. The lead ingots are interesting to archaeologists, but priceless to physicists trying to detect very low levels of radioactivity.

The Roman lead, protected from cosmic radiation and nuclear fallout by sea 100ft deep, and smelted so long ago that most of its natural radioactivity has gone, provides ideal shielding for the most sensitive instruments.

Much of the lead will find its way to a laboratory deep beneath the peak of Gran Sasso in the Apennines, where physicists are trying to detect exotic particles of

matter, including muons, neutrinos and magnetic monopoles.

These particles will pass through the mountain to be detected by large instruments, but the numbers that the physicists expect to count are so low that it is vital to eliminate any stray signals from natural radioactivity. For that, they need very effective shielding, and the Roman lead is ideal.

Modern lead is less suitable because it has low radioactivity of its own, through the decay of lead-210, which has a half-life of 22 years. The Roman lead has been at the bottom so long that most of the lead-210 originally present has decayed. Measurements at Milan, reported in the *CERN Courier*, show

that its radioactivity is extremely low.

Modern low-activity lead can be produced, but it is too expensive for the heavy shielding needed below the Gran Sasso. The physicists, Gianni Fiorentini and Ettore Fiorini, were therefore delighted when the wreck was found.

Scattered across a sandy sea bottom were about 1,500 ingots, each weighing about 73lb, dated by their shape and weight to the first half of the first century BC. Every ingot is stamped with the name of its manufacturer, the commonest being the Pontilini family, known to have been active at that time.

The lead was probably mined and smelted in Sardinia or on its way to market when the ship carrying it went down.

The freighter, called by the Romans an *onerarius magnus*, was apparently purpose-built for carrying heavy loads of metal. The keel is reinforced by huge iron nails more than 2ft long.

The physicists have collaborated with an archaeologist, Donatella Salvi, to ensure that complete records are kept. They hope the source of the lead may be established by comparing trace element ratios.

NIGEL HAWKES

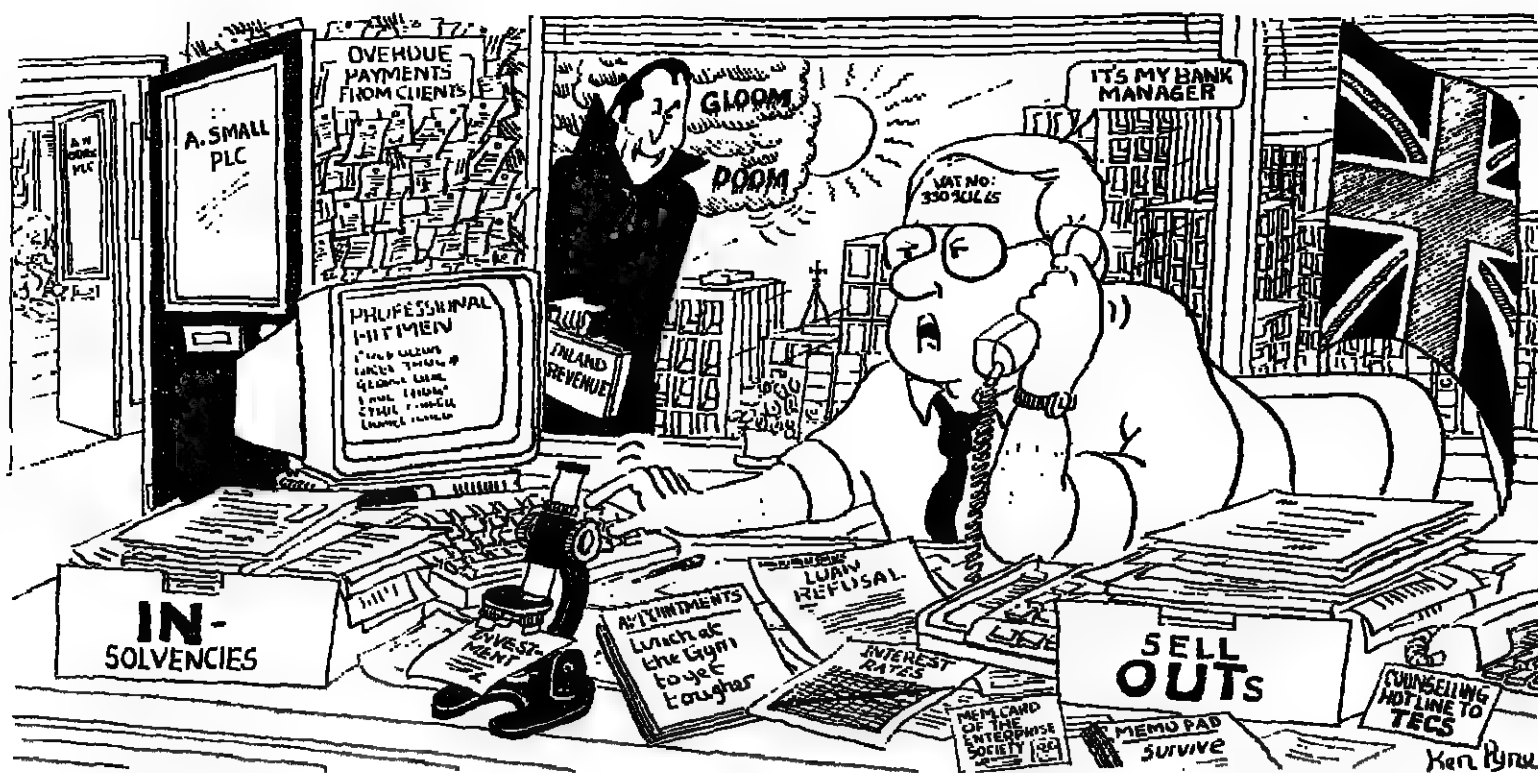
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BA	English and Spanish	Russian Language and Literature
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Ancient History and Social Anthropology	Classics	German
Archaeology and Sociology	Classics	German
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Go-getter spirit survives

More people are choosing to start small enterprises, apparently undeterred by the failures caused by the recession and high interest rates, Derek Harris writes

There is a breed of British entrepreneur tough enough to go into business, despite the rising number of failures. The number of businesses registered for VAT in 1990 rose by an estimated 50,000 — almost 1,000 a week — which compares surprisingly well with the record 1,600 a week during the 1989 boom.

Registrations and deregistrations for VAT give only a partial view of smaller business activity, but employment department estimates show a 4 per cent increase in the number of small businesses registered during 1990.

New businesses coming into the VAT net during 1990 were down by 8 per cent. The failure rate, measured by deregistration, rose by 7.5 per cent. In the analyses, a calculation was built in to offset the statistically dampening effects of the higher VAT threshold introduced in the 1990 Budget.

Insolvency figures collected by the trade and industry department covering business individuals — in contrast to

companies — showed that the consistent rise through last year was maintained during the first half of 1991. In the second quarter of this year about 8,000 individuals in business went bust.

Opinions gathered by the Small Business Research Trust give expectations of a cutback in jobs and depressed investment intentions. Other recent estimates suggest that investment levels by small businesses could be approaching a six-year low.

The promised economic turnaround is awaited with particular keenness by the small-business sector, which has been savaged by the recession. High interest rates hit small businesses especially hard because of the sector's dependence on bank funding. Furthermore, when interest rates began to ease, the banks,

their own commercial operations at risk, grew tougher over loan support. The uniform business rate was another burden, while late payments from customers — 90 days is now common — have pushed many small operators to the financial edge.

However, Colin Gray, the deputy director general of the trust, believes that though some sectors may have been disproportionately affected — the construction industry, for example, and business services such as marketing and packaging — there are others, including services such as hairdressing and fast-food outlets, that have probably stood up well.

Mr Gray says small businesses will probably be the first to recover as the recession ends because they are inherently more flexible and can often react to change more quickly than big businesses. He adds: "Now that interest rates have come down, small businesses see their biggest problem as the lack of business. The economic indicators are mixed, but probably we are at the turning point."

The small businessman's struggle to survive has thrown

down a challenge, particularly to the newly established network of 82 business-led Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in England and Wales, part of whose brief has been to foster local economic regeneration. Their main financial thrust has necessarily been on training, but an increasing number is trying to foster new small businesses.

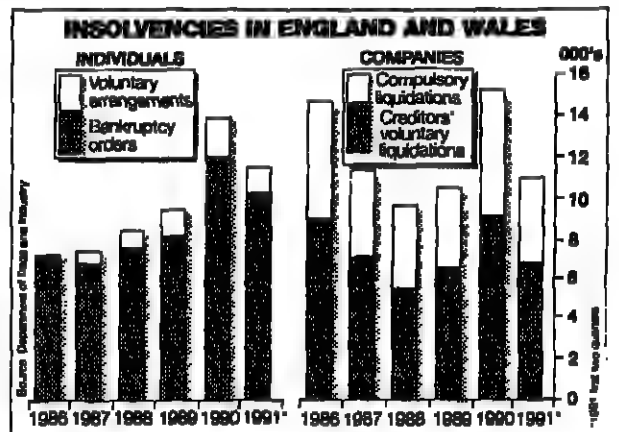
The TECs, left to develop their own strategies in response to local needs, have a varied pattern of action. About 20 have so far set up substantial business development programmes. Some are

already spending at least 15 per cent of their resources on help for smaller businesses, using enterprise allowance money to meet local needs, rather than making £40-a-week payments for a year.

Basic advice and counselling for small businesses is already being made available by most TECs. However,

because many TECs are campaigning for more government funding, less effort might be going into enterprise. Some TEC leaders complain privately that "enterprise initiative" help by the trade and industry department is not closely enough dovetailed with the efforts of the TECs because they operate under the employment department.

However, the government has so far decided against changing the interdepartmental arrangements.



Why banks had to get tough

The government is encouraging more venture capitalists to think small

HIGH street banks, the traditional source of operational cash for small businesses through loans and overdrafts, have been forced by the recession to be more realistic about their criteria for lending

to small businesses. At best they are being sensibly tough but at worst, arbitrarily consigning businesses to failure (Derek Harris writes). The banks are likely to continue to be the most important source of cash for small businesses by offering many flexible loans, some comparatively long-term by bank standards. However, when an overdraft is cut back by a bank manager, or a loan refused, an entrepreneur must consider an outsider taking a stake in their business.

The Local Investment Networking Company (Linc), operated by a dozen United Kingdom enterprise agencies, is bringing together more cash-hungry businesses and investors.

Linc has dealt with investments worth £300,000 this year and seen a surge of enquiries in recent months. A typical stake is £30,000, although one deal this year reached £150,000. Most of the big venture capital providers are not interested in this level, although tiny businesses with a promise of exceptional growth, such as in high technology, may gain backing.

Eric Forth, the minister for small businesses at the employment department, is planning an autumn initiative to close this "equity gap". It is likely that Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in England and Wales and their Scottish counterparts, the Local Enterprise Companies, will be encouraged to fund small businesses.

An encouraging trend is for the establishment of one-stop aid shops that point entrepreneurs to likely sources of financial help. There are many of these, from local authorities to EC funds.

The Rural Development Commission provides top-up finance for a project that might not otherwise be launched successfully. Typical advances range between £5,000 and £15,000.

Buying a franchise still offers one of the best ways to get loan capital because the franchisor has a track record.

Southern European partners lead the way

Britain may be heading for a change in economic structure if the government continues to encourage rapid growth in small businesses, Professor David Storey writes

In the early to mid 1980s, when attempts were made to promote an enterprise culture in Britain, government ministers attributed the relatively poor performance of the economy to a relative absence of small businesses.

In the popular language of the time, small companies were equated with entrepreneurialism and dynamism. A favoured comparison was with Japan, where small businesses were seen to play a leading role and where long-term economic growth rates were high.

In the early 1990s, it is possible to take a more informed view of the importance of small companies in developed economies and how that has changed during the past 20 or 30 years.

This is partly because of the efforts of statistical agencies to make their data more internationally comparable and partly because, over time, more data has become available.

United Kingdom statistics show the 1980s as a decade in which there was an increase from 1.29 million to 1.66 million businesses registered for VAT. The proportion of self-employed people rose from 7.9 per cent in 1980 to 12.3 per cent in 1990.

Have the 1980s been the growth of enterprise decade, as it is so often proclaimed, and if so, what are the implications for the development of the British economy?

Are the countries with which the United Kingdom would like to be compared fast-growing economies dominated by small businesses? Data for the UK's European Community partners suggests that in 1986 the UK was close to the European average, with 23 per cent of the workforce in companies that had fewer than ten workers, compared with a European Community average of 24 per cent, and 47 per cent of the UK workforce in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), compared with an EC average of 45 per cent. The UK is most often compared with Germany, France and sometimes Italy

within the EC. The table shows that both France and Germany are less dominated by SMEs than is the UK. Furthermore, it is, with the exception of Denmark, the less developed southern European countries in which small businesses are important.

The increasing importance of small companies in the UK appears to be moving the economy towards that of

with the partial exception of Japan. Nevertheless, the UK data is different from that of the other countries in one significant respect. In the UK the changing importance of small businesses occurred at the end of the 1960s rather than in the 1980s.

Work by Alan Hughes and Paul Dunne and his colleagues at Cambridge University has shown that the relative importance of manufacturing small businesses in the UK fell, so far as can be discerned, fairly continuously, from the 1930s to the end of the 1960s. It was in the early 1970s that small businesses started to become more important; the 1980s have merely accelerated this trend.

More contentiously, however, Hughes and Dunne assert that a significant proportion of the apparent increase in small companies in the early 1980s has come about because of the use of a wider sampling frame by government statisticians.

The statistics reflect long-term trends within the UK economy. What is less clear is whether these trends reflect a dynamic and enterprising economy or merely a step on the road to a less developed style that is typical of southern Europe.

The writer is the director of research at the Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises, University of Warwick, Coventry



David Storey: better view

Spain or Portugal and away from those of France and Germany. Although there has been a clear increase in the importance of smaller businesses in the UK during the 1980s it is vital to place these developments in a historical perspective.

The UK is not unusual in experiencing, during the 1980s, a rise in the relative importance of small businesses; the same occurred in most developed economies —

SMALL BUSINESSES IN EUROPE			
Country	Companies employing less than 10	Companies employing 10-499	%
Germany	16	27	
France	22	42	
UK	23	47	
Italy	40	43	
Spain	41	51	
Netherlands	19	42	
Belgium	31	40	
Greece	not available	46	
Denmark	19	64	
Portugal	38	46	
Ireland	not available	49	
Luxembourg	26	48	
European Community	24	45	

Source: Enterprises in the EC (1991)

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When it takes 22 to quango

Not only entrepreneurs but established small businesses have been plagued by the plethora of quangos and other organisations offering help - from advice to cash. In most areas, overlapping services are offered by local authorities, chambers of commerce and industry, enterprise agencies, government offices and regional economic regeneration.

Some areas have been grappling with the problem of overlap. In the northeast, for example, regional spread co-operation grew early. As one young civil servant said after long experience in enterprise work in the region: "In this game, you find it takes not two but 22 to tango."

The coordination process, with its promise of improving the lot of small businesses, is being hastened in many areas by the government's introduction of the England and Wales network of more than 80 Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). The same is happening with the sister Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) in Scotland.

Kent TEC, for instance, contracted with its county council to take over the functions of the Kent Economic Development Board, which had been set up to attract inward investment after the closure of Chatham dockyard.

The TEC met 18,000 companies in the area and found a need to achieve coordination. In the northeast, Tyneside TEC covers not only Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead but both northern and southern Tyneside. There are 14 local enterprise agencies (LEAs) in the area and four local authorities. The agencies are contracted by the TEC to provide counselling and other help for small businesses and the local authorities are involved in influencing TEC-driven developments.

By December, business advice centres will have been opened in each of the four main areas covered by the TEC, providing a single focus

Too much advice can be confusing

Derek Harris describes attempts to coordinate help

for a small business seeking help. Each of the centres, with Linda Harrison in overall charge as centres manager, will have a business club where new business heads can meet and generate network relationships for mutual help.

Target customers range from start-ups to businesses up to three years old. Enterprise allowance cash can be up to £60 a week for a year, possibly with a 13-week extension at a £40-a-week rate.

Olivia Grant, the TEC chief executive, says: "A priority, as well as increasing the numbers of self-employed and creation of new businesses, is to help newly created firms."

At Birmingham TEC, which started operations last November, Mark Tovey, the enterprise manager, says: "We wanted to move away from unemployed people starting in business with help from the business allowance scheme, but without other support. A lot of people in the last few years have lost out by not being properly prepared for a start-up. Our new business programme puts the allowance scheme together with business counselling, training and preparation to business plan stage."

Since last April 1,200 people have been to business advice days, 800 have received help with business plans, 900 counselling sessions have been held and 180 businesses have started.

Mr Tovey says: "There are close links with the city council, the local chamber and other established providers of help for the small business."

The quality of services being provided is increasingly an issue. Birmingham, like many TECs, is developing

quality standards. Hertfordshire TEC has a "business lifeline" for businesses fearing collapse, a project being monitored by the Cranfield School of Management.

Hertfordshire TEC, which spends nearly 17 per cent of its resources on helping businesses to start and develop, has brought a number of schemes to bear on promoting business survival, including "masterclasses", where entrepreneurs can hone their skills to grow in the next few years.

Business in the Community, the umbrella body for Britain's 350 LEAs, is campaigning to improve quality of services at agency level. The emergence of TECs will probably hasten this process because they use agencies on contract to provide counselling and other services and demand minimum quality levels.



Women's business: Olivia Grant and Linda Harrison

Dial BT for credit

Big companies are giving a helping hand to their little brethren

BT is the latest big company to start a fund to develop small businesses. The scheme, FutureStart, was started last June with £3 million from BT. Between 40 and 50 ventures are expected to be funded within the next three years, including individual findings of up to £150,000 (Derek Harris writes).

These are comparatively small amounts in venture capital terms, but they would be difficult to get from many commercial venture capital providers.

About 60 applications have been made. BT's main criterion is that the businesses must be developed in economically depressed areas of the United Kingdom by entrepreneurs living locally. Such areas are usually underdeveloped rural districts, inner cities and places in which the closure of old industries has weakened a local economy.

BT expects a profitable turnover of £1 million or more to be generated within five years and a share of profits from a market flotation or sale of the business.

In extending help to small

businesses, BT, as a former state monopoly, is following in the footsteps of British Steel and British Gas. British Coal, still state-owned, and British Shipbuilders, have made similar drives.

In February last year, British Gas launched a £15 million venture capital fund, BG Ventures, to help small, mainly British companies, that needed additional help for developing new technologies, products or services related to the main business of British Gas.

The target of the other three big industries has been to create more job opportunities by fostering small business development in areas hit by steel, coal and shipbuilding closures.

Vernon Smith, the chief executive of British Steel Industry, says: "These days, rather than start-ups being a

preoccupation, we concentrate on fostering firms that have got over their first critical few years and which, with help, are more likely to produce a greater number of jobs. We look to companies with a potentially long life."

Mr Smith has been impressed by the record of management buyouts (MBOs). A typical example is the Lancashire-based Terra Tek, which was created from a former subsidiary of the McAlpine construction group. British Steel Industry backed an MBO led by Alex Tait, now the managing director. Terra Tek more than doubled its turnover in the first year and is expanding into the growing field of environmental work.

In the past two years, investment in Scottish projects was £1.2 million. The total British Steel Industry investment this year may reach £1.2 million, including about £1 million for Scottish projects.

British Coal Enterprise has been operating since 1985 and has helped to create 73,000 jobs in old mining areas. It has invested £69 million in more than 3,200 projects.

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UNDERSTANDING SMALL BUSINESSES IS OUR BUSINESS

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is the United Kingdom's leading social science research agency. The ESRC supports a wide range of business-related research and aims to provide the UK business community with the highest quality research.

The Council is currently collaborating with Barclays Bank, the European Commission, the Department of Employment and the Rural Development Commission in funding a major research programme on smaller businesses. As the largest research programme of its type ever undertaken in the UK, it is designed to provide the most authoritative statement on small businesses since the Bolton Committee report of 1971.

The programme is co-ordinated by Professor David Storey and has three main Centres and thirteen separate projects.

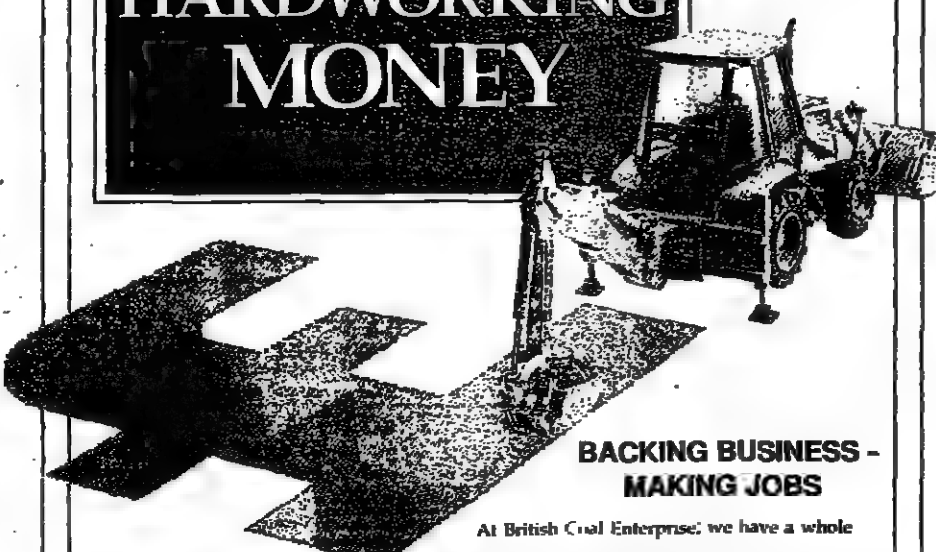
One Centre at the Institute of Manpower Studies, Sussex University, is researching Local Labour Markets and Small Businesses. A second Centre at Kingston Polytechnic examines Small Enterprises in the Service Sector. The third Centre at Cambridge University is examining The Creation, Survival and Growth of Small Firms.

For further information on the programme please contact Professor Storey at SME Centre, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL. Tel: (0243) 523692.

To receive information about the ESRC's other business-related research and activities, please contact the Information Division.

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BT gives small businesses a chance.

At BT, we're happy to do what we can to help this country's small entrepreneurs. That's why we're now funding FutureStart, a community venture fund that's designed to help start-up and early stage businesses in the UK's less prosperous areas. It's another example of our ongoing community programme, a programme that's been designed to help communities to help themselves. Any enquiries relating to FutureStart should be sent to: Harry Fitzgibbons, Managing Director, Top Technology Limited, 20-21 Tookes Court, Cursitor Street, London EC4A 1LB. Tel: 071-242 9900.



A pain-free Feherty is eager for his Cup debut

By MITCHELL PLATT
GOLF CORRESPONDENT

DAVID Feherty yesterday revealed how close he came to being forced to withdraw from next week's Ryder Cup match because of a wrist injury, aggravated during the US PGA Championship last month.

Feherty was so worried that he paid out a five-figure sum to cure the problem. He twice flew to South Africa to see Ivan Levinrad, a sports physiotherapist, for treatment. "It meant missing the last two Johnnie Walker points-counting events, but I had to take that gamble to ensure my fitness," Feherty said. "I didn't want to take the risk of finding out when it was time to get on board Concorde that I was not fit to play."

"I was in a panic because the injury was so painful, I was taking tablets but I knew I had to stop. So I went to see Ivan, whom I've known for eight years and I had faith in, and he put the problem right. He told me the treatment would hurt but that it would cure me. It has."

Feherty, who will attempt to bring his game back to its best in the Epsom Grand Prix which starts at the St Pierre



Feherty: clear of injury

Card of the course

Hole	Yds	Par	Hole	Yds	Par
1	576	5	10	382	4
2	386	4	11	403	4
3	420	4	12	218	3
4	417	4	13	218	3
5	420	4	14	321	4
6	420	4	15	375	4
7	472	4	16	454	4
8	472	4	17	451	4
9	472	4	18	297	3
Out 3,355		35	In 3,688		35
Total yardage 6,992			Par 71		

Club, Chesham today, has also been running four miles each day as part of an intensive fitness programme. He has shed 12lbs and lost an inch from his waistline, which could be an embarrassment to the Ryder Cup team.

He has played only twice since he finished joint seventh in the US PGA Championship. "But I'm looking forward to playing in the Ryder Cup for the first time," he said. "I am as mentally and physically fit as I have ever been."

Feherty is one of six members of Europe's team, which leaves on Monday for the match at Kiahwah Island, competing this week. Colin Montgomerie, Steven Richardson, David Gifford, Mark James and José María Olazábal are also seeking to win a first prize of £75,000.

Ian Woosnam, Nick Faldo and Severiano Ballesteros are also resting prior to the Ryder Cup, which is a pity for Epsom, who with this event end a five-year association with the PGA European Tour.

Montgomerie and Richardson will each hope to profit by the absence of Ballesteros, who leads the Volvo order of merit with £413,753. Montgomerie (£295,085) and Richardson (£284,603) are aware that time is running out for them to catch him.

Jockey Club rejects Ayr Silver Cup proposals

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

TOMORROW'S Ladbroke Ayr Gold Cup was clouded by controversy yesterday after it was disclosed that the Jockey Club has rejected a proposed £30,000 consolation race for the large number of horses balloted out of Europe's richest sprint handicap.

Sixty-nine horses were declared for the £75,000 Gold Cup at the five-day stage and, with a maximum of 29 places, there will be more horses balloted out than run — for the second successive year.

The idea of an Ayr Silver Cup — as the second race would have been known — came from Jack Barry two years ago. It was taken

up by Mike Dillon, of Ladbroke, and David McIlhenny, clerk of the course, who wrote to Portman Square following last year's race.

Ladbroke were prepared to sponsor the consolation race on the same day as their main race. Owners' entry fees of £500 for the Gold Cup would have boosted the silver cup purse and, with money from Ayr racecourse, little or no Levy Board support would have been required.

Dillon said owners who entered their horse for the Ayr Gold Cup could have indicated on their entry form if they wanted to run in the consolation race in the event of being balloted out.

The Jockey Club rejected the

plan because of "thousands of practical problems involved". David Pipe, the Jockey Club's director of public affairs, said yesterday.

Instead, the race-planning department agreed to provide Ayr with a separate six-furlong race on Friday, which has £5,000 of Levy Board support.

"We felt it was a very interesting idea that was put forward. But we were concerned with the rules and regulations with regards to prize money and the general confusion it would have brought to the system," John Smeed of the race-planning department, said.

McIlhenny put a brave face on the setback yesterday. "I am not knocking the Jockey Club because they had a lot on their

mind when we put this forward. During the next few months we will go back to them with a new proposal and hope they listen to it."

While the consolation race would undoubtedly have caused difficulties for racing's administrators, the idea is sound and the lack of flexibility within the race-planning structure would appear to be the problem.

Sarcia was displaced as favourite for the Ayr Gold Cup yesterday after it was confirmed that Willie Carson will not be available to ride David Elsworth's sprinter.

Brett Doyle, who rode Sarcia to victory at Goodwood in July, takes over the plum ride. Gentle Hero, the new 12-1 favourite

with the sponsors, will also be ridden by a claimer, Colin Munday, as Michael Roberts is also unavailable.

Carson, who is required at Newbury on Friday, made the most of his shortened visit to Ayr when he completed a 72-1 treble on the opening day of the Western meeting on Rawanbe, Bold Stroke and Azzam.

The Scottish-born jockey was seen at his finest, culminating in a record ride on Azzam in the day's feature race, the Donsdale Cup.

The winner of last year's November Handicap made all the running and sped away from his rivals in the final furlong to finish ten lengths clear of Spinning, breaking the track record by 1.2 seconds.

John Dunlop, who made the long journey from his Sussex base, may now try to find a group race abroad for Azzam.

The stewards held an enquiry into the running of Sarcia, the 7-4 favourite, who finished last, beaten more than 17 lengths.

Ray Cochrane reported that Sarcia "was not feeling right at any stage and hanging throughout the race", while trainer Jimmy Fitzgerald told the stewards that the horse had run "well below expectations".

The stewards accepted the explanations.

Bold Stroke, the only favourite to oblige, had initiated a Dunlop double when coming clear by four lengths from Court Circular in the Sandgate Maiden Stakes.

3.45 SMURFIT INJURED JOCKEYS FUND HANDICAP CHASE (2,427: 2m 4f) (5)

1 108 CAPTAIN MOR 138 (D.F.G.) W A Stephen 5-120
2 3-01 BRANSTON 24 (D.F.G.) W A Stephen 5-111
3 3-01 CLEVER FLY 12 (D.F.G.) G S Richards 11-1
4 3-01 ROY PRINCE 21 (D.F.G.) G S Richards 11-1
5 3-01 ROY PRINCE 21 (D.F.G.) G S Richards 11-1

Evening Cover Fly, 11-4 Branston, 7-2 Captain Mor, 10-1 Kizane, 18-1 Roy Prince.

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4.15 ASSOCIATED LEISURE LTD CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (2,187: 2m) (5)

1 812 ST LOUIS BLUES 278 (D.F.G.) W A Stephen 5-110
2 141 MONNER 127 (D.F.G.) W A Stephen 5-117
3 245 COUTURE TIGRIS 115 (D.F.G.) W A Stephen 5-117
4 245 COUTURE TIGRIS 115 (D.F.G.) W A Stephen 5-117
5 245 COUTURE TIGRIS 115 (D.F.G.) W A Stephen 5-117

Evening Cover Fly, 11-4 Branston, 7-2 Captain Mor, 10-1 Kizane, 18-1 Roy Prince.

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